











**THE SPEECHES AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF**  
**THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.**









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THE RIGHT HON.  
**W. E. GLADSTONE**  
M.P.  
*WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTIONS*

Edited by  
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*WITH PORTRAITS*

IN TEN VOLUMES -

VOL. X.—1888-1891  
\*  
*WITH A PREFACE BY MR. GLADSTONE*

**Methuen & Co.**  
18 BURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.  
1892

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## P R E F A C E

IN the year 1890, Mr. A. W. Hutton, Librarian of the National Liberal Club, and Mr. Cohen, of the Inner Temple, informed me that they were ready to undertake the labour and responsibility of preparing for publication a collection (which must also of necessity be a selection) of my speeches, delivered during the last sixty years. They also apprised me that they had made the necessary arrangements with Messrs. Methuen, subject to my consent, for the production of the work.

Taking into view the variety and importance of the subjects to which these addresses relate, and the nature of the offices which I have held, I have felt that it was not simply a question of their intrinsic merits, and that the consent which was asked could not be properly withheld.

Mr. Hutton and Mr. Cohen were aware that while a number of the speeches, by no means inconsiderable, had from time to time been corrected by myself, a much larger number had not been so corrected; and that it would be beyond my power now to undertake so large a labour.

They cheerfully engaged, however, both to select with care the best reports, and to refer to me such passages as in their judgment might seem to require it; and I had full confidence alike in their acuteness and in their intention. Undoubtedly it cannot be said that their undertaking raises the work as a whole to the precise level of one corrected throughout by the author. Nevertheless, I am convinced from my experience in a former case—that of the rather voluminous speeches delivered by me in Scotland during and after 1879—that substantial correctness can in this way with rare exceptions be attained. On this footing it is that I take leave to introduce the work to those who may feel an interest in it; and I cannot too warmly thank Mr. Hutton and Mr. Cohen for the efforts they have made, nor too strongly express my belief that they will do everything that is within the reach of ability, combined with assiduity, to fulfil their undertaking.

W. E. G.

LONDON, *June* 1892.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE text of the following pages has been based, in the case of the Parliamentary speeches, upon *Hansard*, and, in other cases, upon newspaper reports, chiefly those of the *Times*. It has frequently been necessary to collate *Hansard* with the newspaper reports, or these with one another, in order to clear up doubtful passages. Where any speech has been published separately, that form of it has been used. Many passages have been revised, and a few corrected, by Mr. Gladstone himself. We have occasionally made slight verbal changes, or omitted a few words, on our own responsibility, where the reports were obviously incorrect or ungrammatical; but in no case, of course, in such a way as to affect the argument in the slightest degree. Throughout, our sole aim has been to reproduce as faithfully as possible the actual words of the speaker.

With regard to the notes, some of them may appear to the present actors and spectators in the theatre of thought and politics to be trivial or unnecessary, but in writing them some thought has been taken for the future.

We have to express our thanks to the many and distinguished correspondents who have answered our questions, to the elucidation of many points. Above all, our thanks are due to Mr. Gladstone himself for his invaluable help, without which this Edition would not have appeared,

A. W. H.

H. J. C.

*June 10, 1892.*



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# MR GLADSTONE'S SPEECHES

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## CRIMINAL LAW IN IRELAND

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 26, 1888

On June 25, Mr John Morley moved—"That, in the opinion of this House, the operation of the 'Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1837,' and the manner of its administration, undermine respect for law, estrange the minds of the people of Ireland, and are deeply injurious to the interests of the United Kingdom." The next night Mr Gladstone spoke. The resolution was rejected by 366 to 273.

MR SPEAKER, I do not feel my temper to be severely tried by the rather violent attacks of the right hon. gentleman<sup>1</sup> who has just sat down, who says that I, more than any other man, am responsible for the dreadful crime which darkened the month of May 1882, and who alleges that I habitually make in the country or here "false" charges—an epithet which I think I have carefully avoided on every occasion in speaking of my opponents. The avoidance of such an epithet is, if I may so say, a characteristic of civilised political controversy. I have, however, not the least desire to interfere with the liberty of the right hon. gentleman; and if I felt inclined to be angry with him at all, it would be with that large infusion of charity which induced him, after attempting to show that I had made inconsistent accusations, to explain them by a reference to the accruing infirmities of age. I shall not pretend to determine to what exact degree I am suffering from those infirmities; but I may venture to say that, while sensible that the lapse of time is undoubtedly extremely formidable and affects

<sup>1</sup> Mr Chaplin.

me in more than one particular, yet I hope that, for a little while at any rate, I may remain not wholly unable to cope with antagonists of the calibre of the right hon. gentleman. The right hon. gentleman has kindly and generously given me my choice between two accusations, which he says are incompatible and contradictory. I decline to avail myself of the option so handsomely accorded to me. I adhere in the fullest sense of every word to both of those accusations. There is one qualification which the right hon. gentleman did not mention. I made it clear in the speech which he has quoted, that while I made against the majority as a body the distinct charge to which he has referred, I did not make it against every individual of that majority, because I recollected that there were exceptions. I think, if I remember right, my right hon. friend the Member for West Birmingham<sup>1</sup> was an exception. If my memory serves me, I recollect that at the period of the Election my right hon. friend referred to Coercion as a policy which he would be inclined, under certain circumstances and under certain conditions, to support. But as regards the body in general, I have made that charge, and, please God, I will make it again. I do not intend, Sir, to be drawn aside from the business of to-night. I meet the right hon. gentleman fairly when I say that I hold myself responsible for both of these accusations, presuming to differ from him on what he thinks their contradictory character. In my firm conviction, of course, with all due deference to his superior judgment, they are both of them true, both of them historical, both of them rational, both of them within the facts. It is impossible within the narrow limits assigned to this debate for each speaker, perhaps for any speaker, to traverse the whole field of an indictment so wide as that which has been brought by my right hon. friend the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne<sup>2</sup> against the Crimes Act and its administration in Ireland. There is a general understanding, I believe, that the debate shall close to-night. In my opinion, for such a subject to have been fully and satisfactorily discussed, it would have required three times the period which is assigned to

<sup>1</sup> Mr Joseph Chamberlain.

<sup>2</sup> Mr John Morley.

it. Notwithstanding that, I am making no complaint at the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government in this matter, although I did regret that the right hon. gentleman, the First Lord of the Treasury<sup>1</sup> found himself in duty obliged to threaten us with what would happen in case the debate should be unduly prolonged. He has pointed to the consequences that would ensue in regard to the mutilation and the possible loss of a measure to which we attach great value. But that is a passing matter. I am aware it is desired in the present state of public business—and I think it does great honour to the Irish Members that they should concur in the arrangement—that we should be content with placing fairly, although inadequately, the charges which we have to make, and that we should then revert to the consideration of the great public matters that we have to dispose of. I state this, however, simply as an introduction to a separate statement. With the exception of one particular subject—namely, what I deem to be the extremely important case of Killeagh—I do not intend to enter into details upon the several portions of this matter. They were treated by my right hon. friend<sup>2</sup> in a manner which, if not complete—and complete it could not be—was wonderfully comprehensive, lucid, able, and concise, and I am ready in what I pass over to be bound by the statement which he made.

Now, Sir, I am compelled first to reiterate the complaint, though I will not dwell upon it, that information has been withheld which ought to have been given to us. I found, in fact, upon that withholding of information, upon the manner in which information has been given, upon the illusory and inaccurate character of the statements of the right hon. gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland,<sup>3</sup> a charge which I think we can sustain, and for which I make myself responsible—whether intended or not, it has amounted on the part of the Government to an endeavour to oust the House of Commons from its proper jurisdiction in watching the operation of exceptional laws, and in making provision, whenever circumstances seem to require it, for the main-

<sup>1</sup> Mr W. H. Smith.

<sup>2</sup> Mr John Morley.

<sup>3</sup> Mr A. J. Balfour.

tenance of the sanctity of private rights. Now, Sir, I remind the House that we were refused information on the depositions connected with the imprisonment of Mr Dillon.<sup>1</sup> We have been absolutely refused wholesale information in the case of conspiracy. We have been refused information on the subject which of all others was best calculated to test the success of the policy of Her Majesty's Government—namely, information relating to derelict land. We obtained, it is true, a Return on the Motion of my right hon. friend<sup>2</sup> of the cases of persons tried under the Crimes Act. And what a statement it was which was presented to us! The right hon. gentleman seems to think it is the duty of each Member for himself to compile statistics, and the duty of the Government to give every opposition they can to supplying us with knowledge in a state in which we can use it. So chaotic and so slovenly a Return on a subject of such importance, without dates of time, without notification of place, without classification of the 2000 offences, so as to enable us to know how many there were of one class, and how many there were of another, I do not think I ever knew presented to Parliament; and, when it is presented, it is at the beginning of a debate which is to terminate on the second night. A graver matter still remains. Information was refused in regard to the deplorable and disgraceful transactions at Mitchelstown. A less grave matter, but one which illustrates the position in which we are placed, was the refusal to give us any information with respect to the transaction at Ennis. And how are we placed? We hear statements made, in this House; we recite them elsewhere. I heard a statement made in this House which I thought challenged and deserved inquiry—namely, that officers in command of Her Majesty's Forces, and especially of cavalry, sent into a certain yard, which the Government described as densely packed with people, a portion of that cavalry. A more unwise, a more blameworthy proceeding, although there was no intention of

<sup>1</sup> On May 11th 1888, under circumstances which led to a debate in the House of Commons on May 14th.

<sup>2</sup> Mr J. Morley.

charging, I could not have supposed. It was also stated that there was a charge of the cavalry in the yard. That was at the time not admitted by the Government; but that the cavalry were sent into the yard they never questioned for a moment. I made the charge in a speech at a public meeting, that the cavalry were sent into that yard, and I admit there were words of mine which might have been understood in the sense that I gave credit to the statement that the cavalry did make the charge. That, however, was quite an incidental part; the substance of the charge I meant to make was that the cavalry were sent into the yard. For that charge there was no foundation. The cavalry were not sent into the yard. A particular hussar went into the yard, and seems there to have misconducted himself, to the injury of one or two perfectly innocent persons. What happened? Our prayer in this House was for inquiry. We made none of these charges as proved facts. They were reported in the newspapers. We, seeing them there, prayed for inquiry. We were refused all inquiry; and this officer, for whom I have a great respect, for I believe him to be an honourable and a liberal-minded man—that is, I believe him to have been an honourable and liberal-minded man—Colonel Turner—writes a letter to the newspaper denouncing me as a person totally void of the sense of truth and justice, because I had made a charge, which charge was made in this House, and not denied by Her Majesty's Government. That is the position in which we are placed because of this almost systematic refusal of accurate information on the part of Her Majesty's Government in a case of this vital importance. I must point out, in all fairness, that when he said that I had stated this matter in defiance of what had been stated by the Government in the House of Commons on the 12th of April, he completely admitted that the cavalry had been sent into the yard densely packed with people. Well, Sir, the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer<sup>1</sup> made a statement which I may take notice of, in order that I may come nearer to the vital parts of this case. The right hon. gentleman spoke of two cases of murder

<sup>1</sup> Mr Goschen.

in Ireland in which the Crimes Act had been useful—one by the change of venue, and the other by the use of the private inquiry. Every man in this House rejoices in those two solitary cases in which the Crimes Act has been of use; but the right hon. gentleman seemed to think, and seemed to wish the House to think, that these were the main matters for which the Crimes Act had been passed. Why, Sir, was there any difficulty in this House last year made by my hon. friends near me, or by myself, on the question of properly criminal jurisdiction? Nothing of the sort. My right hon. friend—I think in the very first speech he made upon the subject—said that he was perfectly ready to entertain the consideration of provisions for the *bona fide* corroboration of the Criminal Law. I expressed my concurrence with him, and I believe he actually pointed in principle to these very two questions—the change of venue and the clause of private inquiry. I know that that clause of private inquiry took a long time; but why did it take a long time? It was because of the bungling and inefficient manner in which it had been drawn, so that when it came into this House it consisted of thirty lines, and by the time it received the sanction of the House in Committee it consisted of, I believe, 120 lines. Sir, there should have been no difference of opinion between us on these matters; but what was our contention from the first? It was that this was not a Crimes Act at all. It was not framed for the purpose of putting down crime. It was a Combination Act; it professed to go against conspiracy; it was really aimed against combination, and we shall see how it has been applied in these matters. But when the right hon. gentleman wishes the issue to be taken on the subject of the two murder cases, as to which there are not two opinions in this House, and wishes it to be supposed that this is the question now raised on which the House ought to decide—against these two cases of murder I point to the 2000 cases in which Her Majesty's Irish subjects have been prosecuted by the Government, and in which hundreds of them, unless I am very much mistaken—I believe I might say by far the larger majority of those 2000—have had to suffer the anxiety of trial and the

penalty of imprisonment; and you cannot, by pointing to two cases of murder, in which particular provisions that nobody would have objected to on principle have been put in operation, escape the issue on the general administration of the Crimes Act.

Now, Sir, I shall not attempt, after the powerful speech of the hon. Member for North-East Cork,<sup>1</sup> to speak of the Plan of Campaign or of Mr Dillon, but I shall remark on the manner in which the right hon. gentleman who has just sat down treats me with respect to the Plan of Campaign. Having quoted a line and a half from a speech of mine, he thereupon expands it by his great power of paraphrase, and thus, making me responsible for the padding he puts in, he is good enough to express his lively satisfaction at my admission of fair and sound doctrines which are in reality the offspring of his own fertile brain. I was certainly not less than half-an-hour in the month of February<sup>2</sup> in giving fully and carefully my views of the Plan of Campaign. I am not going to enter into it at large at present; what I am going to do is this—to state in one single sentence what I believe the right hon. gentleman has not the smallest idea of, and what I do not know whether the Government thoroughly comprehend—namely, what is the real contention, that hon. gentlemen sitting on the opposite side of the House, have to meet with respect to the Plan of Campaign? I shall state it without a word of comment, and the contention, as I understand it, is this—that the Plan of Campaign was framed when Parliament had refused to make any legislative provision for the necessities of the tenantry of Ireland in the year 1886, and that it met the case by making demands upon the landlords equal or inferior to those which, in the Act of 1887, the Land Commission had acknowledged to be just. That is the true state of the question. It is idle to travel round and round it as the right hon. gentleman has done; it is idle to advance against it the naked doctrine that it is the law, and that the law shall be obeyed. I know there are those in this House to whom it seems to be a cardinal prin-

<sup>1</sup> Mr W. O'Brien.

<sup>2</sup> Feb. 17th; see vol. ix.



ciple and a sacred duty to make no investigations of Irish history, no more than they think right, or of the general opinion of the world as to the relations between Ireland and England. But that is not so in Ireland. The recollections and the traditions of Irish history are burnt into the very soul of the people. We know how the traditions of Marlborough survived from generation to generation on the Continent, and you ought to know how the saying, "The Curse of Cromwell," has lived from generation to generation in Ireland. These things are known and felt there. The Irish people are aware what are the horrors, what are the atrocities almost incredible, that have been done in Ireland in the name of law—the tortures, the murders, the crimes of every description which, when they have not been done under the name of law, have been covered by subsequent Acts of Indemnity; and who can suppose that a people whose whole souls are full of these painful and grievous recollections can come to the consideration of the law in the same mind and the same spirit as the Judge sitting upon the Bench? In expecting it you show your ignorance of human nature, your incapacity for statesmanship. The principles on which you act have never guided wise legislative assemblies, which have always made allowances for the circumstances which determine the character of national emotions and recollections, and which have been aware that in the mixed condition of human affairs conditional conflicts between law and public feeling are not unfrequent. Unhappily, Ireland is perhaps the most conspicuous country in the world, where law has been on one side and justice on the other.

You do not consider—you do not seem to think it worth while to consider—the facts of Mr Dillon's case. I will not discuss the matter at large after the vindication he has received from the powerful statement made by the hon. Member of North-East Cork; but I will refer briefly to some of the incidents of Mr Dillon's case; and first among them I must say that it is a strange irony of fortune that Mr Dillon should be lectured on the subject of illegality by the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh<sup>1</sup>—the man who has announced that if Parlia-

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Saunderson.

ment think proper to pass a certain law he will lift his hand in violence to resist it and encourage his countrymen to do the same. If Mr Dillon wishes to serve an apprenticeship in illegality, I recommend him to the master opposite; but the apprenticeship will be long and arduous, and Mr Dillon will have to mount the ladder step by step before he reaches the elevation on which the hon. and gallant Member has been comfortably planted long ago. I want the House to consider how it was that Mr Dillon became amenable to the law; for, after all, our prime duty here is not to measure in scales of gold the wisdom or even propriety of every individual or his conduct, but to bring to account the Government of the Queen—those who are responsible, those who sway the majority in this House, those who have at their back the Army and the Constabulary, and that other instrument of justice apparently in some cases not less pliable and effective—namely, the Resident Magistrates. I wish to examine, then, when Mr Dillon became amenable to the law

Mr Dillon, I feel bound to assume—I do not wish to go into the judicial decision—I do not know whether it is a direct judicial decision or not; but I shall assume that he was amenable to the operation of the law. He was amenable in County Louth, but he was amenable to its operation subject to going before a jury. Now, that is of all things what Her Majesty's Government most dread. Lord Spencer administered his Crimes Act from 1882 to 1885, and he administered it with all the success that can possibly attend such a measure, and in that Crimes Act we had taken powers for going past the jury in a straightforward, upright, and honourable manner, in the light of day, in case the necessity should arise. It never did arise, and the Act was administered without departure from the principle of trial by jury. What has been done here? An act is done in a county of Ireland, a county which has a pure and splendid reputation so far as outrage is concerned. I am told that as to Louth it may be said—as I am happy to say it may be said of many parts of Wales—that long years have passed since an outrage has been committed in that county. Yet Louth was subjected

to the indignity of being proclaimed under the Crimes Act, in order that Mr Dillon might not have the benefit of a jury. These are the acts—this is one of the acts—which provoke men to say that they are not only harsh, not only are they cruel, but they are mean. Of them any Government ought to be ashamed; and if it were possible for the right hon. gentleman, by those researches of which he is so fond, to find that something of the kind was done by a Liberal Government, I would not stoop to apologise for such an act. If I had a share in it, I would take a full share of the responsibility, and perform whatever penance you might choose to impose. The County Louth has been proclaimed in order that Mr Dillon might be deprived of his rights as a British subject, which he possessed at the time he made his speech. Is that the way in which you propose to propagate respect for the law in Ireland? Is that the way in which you think you will draw the heart of Ireland nearer? Nearer to what? Not to the heart of England, for these two great hearts, I rejoice to say, are already morally joined in one; but nearer to Dublin Castle, nearer to the Viceroy, nearer to the Chief Secretary, nearer to the Tory and Dissident majority? It is necessary, under the high sense of duty that governs the administration of the right hon. gentleman, that Mr Dillon should be subjected to the indignity of being put into prison costume. What says the right hon. gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire?<sup>1</sup> "Serve him right." Serve him right! Is it right, then, to insult a gentleman of his character? Suppose an accident happened to the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh in the contingencies which might arise, and which he has foreshadowed. I do not believe that, among his strongest opponents below the gangway, there is one that would, for a moment, tolerate that this indignity should be put upon him, But this has been done to Mr Dillon. Why? On the ground of the inflexible morality which is so characteristic, as we all know, of the Irish Secretary, that he cannot help observing upon the want of it in other people. His high morality will

<sup>1</sup> Mr Chaplin.

not endure the unequal treatment in two cases. Is it equal treatment? Is the prison dress for Mr Dillon the same thing as the prison dress for the man with the frieze coat? Is it? Is it the same thing? The right hon. gentleman says it is. I say it is not the same, and I appeal to an authority better than myself, and better than the authority of the right hon. gentleman; for if it is the same infliction, I put these two questions—Why did Parliament provide in England that every person for the offence of sedition should cease to be subject to this indignity, and should become a first-class misdemeanant? And why did the right hon. gentleman, who is troubled with a stiff, unbending conscience, bend that conscience in the case of the priest? If the prison dress be the same thing for Mr Dillon and the frieze coat, is it the same thing for Mr Dillon and the priest? The right hon. gentleman has not dared to put the prison dress upon the priest. He receded from it not because he was merciful, but because he was afraid. [Cheers and laughter.] I hope the right hon. gentleman enjoys that. I believe he has said he had no option—that the law prescribed it, and that the law must be obeyed. Then, I ask, why was the law violated by the right hon. gentleman in the case of the priest? How can he reconcile his conduct to Mr Dillon and other Members of this House with his conduct to the priests, or with the policy which has long ago dictated the adoption of a wise and gentle and humane but perfectly protective, law for the treatment of prisoners committed for sedition in England? What did the judge say in the case of Mr Dillon? He inflicted the maximum sentence. But why? Because of Mr Dillon's great influence. Therefore, he said—"I will inflict the maximum sentence." But how has Mr Dillon used that influence? Go back with me to the memorable and melancholy day at Mitchelstown. [Laughter.] I heard that laugh. It must have been involuntary, for it is shocking to suppose that it was anything else. Go back to the melancholy day at Mitchelstown, and to the great outrages of the officers of the constabulary and the men under their command, and the deaths of three innocent men. It was Mr

Dillon, in my belief, who prevented, by the use of his great influence, a terrible accumulation of that disaster; and that use of his influence ought to have been recollected when he was taken to task by the Judge, and the maximum punishment inflicted upon him, because, in some other case, the Judge differed from the use he had made of the influence. I make no special complaint of the Judge in this case. I cannot say as much in respect of another case to which I shall come by-and-by. But the Judge in this case said—"Mr Dillon is a man of great influence over his fellow-countrymen." By that he meant over the Irish people. The Judge was perhaps hardly aware that Mr Dillon's influence is not limited to Ireland. There are millions upon millions of people in this country—I believe the large majority of the people of England, as well as of Scotland and Wales—to whom there could be, on the occasion of a public assembly, no more welcome tidings than that they were about to be addressed by Mr Dillon, and there is hardly one whose entrance among them would call forth more enthusiastic acclamation. Now sir, I will venture to say that it is a terrible state of things that a man of Mr Dillon's character, his qualities, and his position, is thus treated. It is a state of things which ought to bring about much reflection, and which cannot be disposed of by a majority to-night in this House.

Well, sir, I am now going into the case of Killeagh. After the daring statement of the hon. and learned Solicitor-General for Ireland,<sup>1</sup> and the yet more daring statement of the right hon. gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland on a former occasion, I wish to set out the whole case to the House. The right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer must not suppose that the slight reference to it with which he was provided has in any degree disposed of it. The hon. and learned Solicitor-General came a little nearer to the point when he stated that the men who were imprisoned at Killeagh had been found guilty of conspiracy at common law for the purpose of starving the police. Found guilty of conspiracy at common law? By whom were they found guilty of conspiracy at common law?

<sup>1</sup> Mr Madden.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND—I did not state that the men had been found guilty of conspiracy at Common Law. What I did state—and as my authority I refer to the judgment of the Court—was that the Judges of the Court of Exchequer said there was before them evidence upon which a jury might have found them guilty of a conspiracy at Common Law.

MR GLADSTONE—I read a report which has all the appearance of care and precision; but I am extremely glad to hear the statement of the hon. and learned gentleman, and I at once withdraw what I intended to say on this subject. But if the hon. and learned gentleman will have the goodness to refer to the newspaper to which I referred this morning—namely, the *Times*—he will find that he has been most seriously misrepresented, for the words I have used are precisely those which are to be found there. I will now pass altogether from that topic. Well, Sir, I come to what was said by the Lord Chief Baron, and I dwell the more readily upon this case because, although, of course, it does not present the entire indictment to the House which it has made against the administration of the Crimes Act, yet it presents what I think is the most important part of the case and goes to the very centre and core of it, because our main contention in the debates of last year was that this Act was not a Crimes Act at all—that is to say, that crime was a secondary and partial subject within its purview: that it was really a Conspiracy Act, and under the name of a Conspiracy Act it was a Combination Act, and was intended to put down lawful and legitimate combination. Now, Sir, let us follow the legality of the proceedings, the competency of the tribunal, and the language of the Government in the case of Killeagh. The hon. and learned Solicitor General for Ireland has, I think, stated very nearly what was said by the Lord Chief Baron in the first part of his remarks. But he left out certain words of the Lord Chief Baron which I think may be accurately represented thus. The Lord Chief Baron was fully of opinion that common action had been proved, and upon this common action he rather thought—that was his expression—there would have been

evidence from which a jury would have concluded that the real object was to injure the police, and that upon evidence of that kind an indictment might be brought and the jury might give a verdict. Very well, let us suppose that is so. Then I want to know what is the state of the law in Ireland? I accept it without question. It is not for me to attempt to affirm or deny it, my business is to accept it. The statement of the Lord Chief Baron is that if four men combine at Killeagh, where there is believed to be a conspiracy existing, and are proved by common action to have refused to deal with the constabulary, a jury might convict them of a criminal offence upon evidence which tended to prove as much as that. Now, suppose, not a case of four men who deal in goods and withhold their goods from the constabulary, but a case in England of 400 men dealing in labour and withholding their labour. I believe I might go a great deal further and say "who break their contract." Even that would not be an overstatement. But in the one case or the other—and I believe I may safely go to the more extreme supposition of a breach of contract—the 400 men would, every one of them, stand scathless in a court of justice. The four Irishmen were sent to prison. Where is the equality of rights? This is what we asked—what we pressed for last year, what we were called factious for demanding. This is what the Government sternly refused. In England the artizan is protected by the law in respect of the disposal of the commodity which he has to dispose of. In Ireland you have refused to protect him by the law in respect of the very same thing. Yet you tell us you will not hear of an Irish Legislature to deal with Irish affairs; that the true principle is that which at Westminster and within the walls of Parliament consecrates (as is pretended) the principle of equality of rights. Then the Lord Chief Baron goes on—because the part of his speech to which I have referred is entirely incidental—"Another offence may possibly have been committed. But the question we have to consider is whether a certain particular offence, which we will go on to consider and define, has been committed or not." What they had to consider—these are the words of the Lord Chief

Baron—was whether the common purpose was that this refusal to deal should be accomplished either by compulsion or by influence which he had called undue influence. I call the particular attention of the House to these words, because everything, in fact, turns upon them. I may dismiss altogether the word “compulsion” in this case, because there had been no charge of compulsion. I have been favoured, not by Her Majesty’s Government, but by the labour and care of a member of this House, with the bulky copies of the depositions, and I have read the whole of them; and they all of them charge in one and the same phrase that the offence was joining in a conspiracy to induce certain persons not to deal. Then said the Lord Chief Baron—“That is the question we have to consider.” What does he say upon it? He was bound to say that he did not find one shadow of evidence whatever in this case, and he did not find any evidence on which it could be argued except in the case of David Barry. What was the case of David Barry? Now, David Barry was sentenced, like the rest, for one month. By some process which I do not understand, but I am glad of it, the sentence seems afterwards to have been reduced to one fortnight, on the ground that David Barry had, apparently to the Judges, acted under intimidation; and, for having acted under intimidation, he was charged and sent to prison for a fortnight for a conspiracy to induce others not to deal. What says the Lord Chief Baron? It is simply this. To be a victim of a conspiracy was, in the view of these Judges, the same thing as to be the author of the conspiracy. The man who refuses to deal through intimidation, and under a fright, which he describes in Court, that man is a sufferer already, and to send him to prison for an offence indicates either a weakness, or a perversity, or an ignorance, or all three combined, such as I could not have believed possible from anything calling itself a Bench of Justice. Of course, any language of the Lord Chief Baron cannot possibly be exaggerated in this case. There is no evidence whatever. Now, Sir, it has been represented by the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer and by the hon. and learned Solicitor General for Ireland, that there may have been a mistake in this case.



Accidents will happen in the best-regulated families, and, consequently, there was a slight error of judgment, but not an error of judgment to form the basis of a charge against the two Resident Magistrates, Mr Gardner and Mr Redmond. What I have to show is this—that this was not an oversight on the part of the Judges. Their attention was expressly and repeatedly called to the distinction taken by the Lord Chief Baron. They did not suppose that the different kinds of conspiracy were confounded together, and that they in sentencing for one might just as well sentence for another. Here is the report, which I quote from *The Cork Examiner* of the 1st of June, of what was said on the occasion. Mr Hodnett, who was acting on the part of the defendants, pointed out to the Judges that there was a total want of evidence, and that the Judges ought to dismiss the summons for want of evidence to show that the defendants entered into a criminal conspiracy to induce others not to supply goods. Observe that he put it before them in the clearest terms. What said Mr Gardner? “We are both against you, Mr Hodnett.” These are the men to whom, to the disparagement of the Superior Courts, you have committed practically in the most delicate and difficult matters the government of Ireland. However, Mr Hodnett was not discouraged and he went on to say—“I have made an argument, and I hope something will be said.” So Mr Gardner proceeded to give his view of the case. He said his view of the case was this—“The evidence went to show that these parties entered into a criminal conspiracy with one another, inasmuch as their acts in the refusing in nearly all the same language and terms showed the conspiracy they had entered into.” That is to say, he deliberately passed over what had been stated by Mr Hodnett, who endeavoured to guide this blind man, and to describe to him the kind of conspiracy that was charged in the indictment. The patience of Mr Hodnett was not yet exhausted, and he said—“That is not the charge. The charge is inducing other persons not to supply goods.” Twice in the most distinct language that man could use these Judges were reminded that it was not a general charge before them of conspiracy, but a charge that they had

induced other persons not to supply goods. Here is the final decision of Mr Gardner, and these are the Judges of whose legal competence the Government are satisfied. He said—"Each defendant should be taken with reference to the others." The Judge, having the case placed before him in the most distinct manner, did not pretend that he had the least scintilla of evidence to show that the defendants had committed a crime. He said that they might have committed a crime; and without any evidence and merely in consequence of an opinion in the sanctuary of his breast he condemned them.

I have given you now what the Lord Chief Baron said and what the Resident Magistrate said. But what did the Government say? Observe, my point is this, and it is recognised on both sides. We are not dealing now with the Common Law of Conspiracy, which derives its criminal character from its being intended to injure a person or a class. That is not the offence charged. The offence charged by the Act is to compel or induce persons not to do certain things. I put a question carefully framed in the sense of the Act. I asked first for the production of all these depositions in cases of conspiracy; and I then asked whether the right hon. gentleman the Chief Secretary could assure the House that in every case where an individual had been convicted under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act the conspiracy to compel or induce some person not to deal with or to work for some other person in the ordinary course of trade, business or occupation, evidence had been taken, to prove, not only the refusal of the individual to work or to deal as above, but to prove that he was implicated in a conspiracy for some one of the said purposes—that is to say, for the purpose of inducing or compelling not to deal with or to work for; and the right hon. gentleman in answer to that question gave me the most positive and distinct pledge. He said—"In all the cases described by the right hon. gentleman evidence has been taken to prove the conspiracy referred to." I presume that he had in his hands at that moment the judgment of the Lord Chief Baron and the judgment of Mr Justice Andrews—Baron Dowse saying nothing

on the subject. He had in his hands the judgment of the Lord Chief Baron, which said there was no evidence whatever, and with the judgment in his hands he told me that evidence had been taken in every case to prove—what? Not to prove conspiracy, but to prove the conspiracy referred to.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND—The right hon. gentleman has confused dates. The answer I gave him was before the judgment was delivered.

MR GLADSTONE—The right hon. gentleman had not the judgment in his hands, but he had the depositions. I have read the whole of these depositions, and they do not contain one single sentence upon any subject except that of the refusal to deal, unless in one single instance. And what is that? It is the sentence in which the constable O'Donoghue, states that there was a meeting on the 4th of March, which meeting is supposed to have had some reference to some combination or other for the purpose of exclusive dealing, and he deposes that he did not see any one of the defendants at that meeting. Was there ever such a case as this? The right hon. gentleman had read the evidence. If he says there is evidence of the conspiracy referred to, let him produce it. It does not exist. He cannot produce it unless all the documents are falsified; and that which he made bold to state to this House, that the conspiracy to induce had evidence taken upon it, is totally contrary to the fact, and the right hon. gentleman has to explain his conduct to the House. But the right hon. gentleman, when we ask him why he has not fulfilled his pledges—this pledge and that pledge—his answer is—"Oh, that has been sufficiently threshed out already, and I cannot go over it again." Such was the language of the Government.

Now this is no question of a miscarriage or of a mistake of an inferior tribunal. It is not a question of mistaking the balance of evidence in regard to which human judgment may go wrong. Here there was no balance of evidence at all. There was, as we know now on the highest authority, no evidence whatever. There could not be any evidence, and there being no evidence, and the attention of the Judge having been

called to the fact that there was no evidence, he deliberately refused to take notice of that call and went on to aggravate his conduct by refusing to state a case. Is this a specimen of the manner in which this Law of Conspiracy is administered in Ireland? I have to put questions to the right hon. gentleman besides that which I have put to him about himself. Are these two Resident Magistrates to continue to administer the Coercion Act? I presume that the Government have considered that subject. I do not undertake to say what is the cause of their misconduct—whether it is bias, whether it is bigotry—ignorance it cannot be, because the thing was placed twice before them—or whether it was feebleness of character. I do not enter into these things. I look at the facts, and say it is totally impossible to place confidence in such a Bench. I say the people of Ireland would be unworthy of the name of men if the spirit of the country did not revolt against such treatment. I am told that this is only one conspiracy case. Only one conspiracy case? Well, it is the only one in which we have been able to get the particulars. How many more are there of such cases? I challenge the right hon. gentleman, and I make an appeal to him to lay upon the table the depositions in all conspiracy cases. He has heard the statement made by an able lawyer in this House that he and his friends have examined 700 out of 2,000 cases, and the conclusion they have come to is that the proceedings were a travesty and caricature of justice. We have got that, and having extracted from the right hon. gentleman some particulars with regard to this special case, we find it to be as flagrant and scandalous as any in the days of Judge Jeffreys [Laughter] The right hon. and learned Lord Advocate<sup>1</sup> has a great faculty for laughter. I know very well that these men have not the power of Judge Jeffreys, and that we do not live in the time of Judge Jeffreys. How far is that the fault of the right hon. gentleman? What the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate ought to appreciate is, that the denial of justice, which is the same thing in the case of a farthing as of a £1,000,000 is as gross, as palpable, and as shameful as ever

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald.

disgraced the time of Judge Jeffreys. I therefore beg the right hon. gentleman to produce the depositions in these cases. I do not know precisely the number of cases. We have no aid from the right hon. gentleman. We have to find our way through a lengthened paper with about 2000 names, out of which there are, I believe, about 150 charged with conspiracy. I think that the particulars of the painful case upon which I have detained the House so long show grounds for the necessity of my demand. If the right hon. gentleman does not give us the particulars of the other cases, we shall be compelled to conclude that the other cases are like this case; and if he disputes it, let him give us the means of judging. If the right hon. gentleman does not give us the means of judging, if he is determined that Parliament shall be excluded from forming an opinion in cases of this kind, that will sustain my charge that it is the policy of the Government to oust the House of Commons from the performance of one of its most sacred duties— that of defending the weak, and maintaining the sanctity of private rights and private liberty.

The right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech last night, contended that the policy of the Government was making progress, slow but sure. That I understand to be the upshot of the principal portions of his speech. What did he point to in support of that contention? He pointed to certain statistics about Boycotting, about which I have to observe that those statistics are an invention of the Government. No such statistics ever were produced until the existence of the present Government. I entirely decline to accept them, because I have no means of testing their accuracy. You might as well bring statistics from the moon as give us your statistics of Boycotting. There is no legal, moral, or social test by which we can judge them. You plead usage, when usage is in your favour; but you depart from usage because your Returns have been prepared—I was almost about to say, manufactured for you—in order to show a considerable diminution of Boycotting. What the right hon. gentleman really means is a diminution in the number of agrarian offences—not a very large diminution but, I admit, a sensible and gratifying diminution. I will not

enter into the question of the cause of that diminution. We do not believe that the cause is to be found either in the Crimes Act or in the mode in which it is applied. We think it is due to other and very different causes. I am not going to enter upon that distinct ground. If you like, I will take the fact upon your showing, and upon your own argument, and assume that it is due to the Crimes Act. If that were so would it be a proof of progress, would it be a proof that you were making your way to a settlement of the Irish question? I think not. Lord Spencer's triumph over agrarian outrage was tenfold what it has been under the right hon. gentleman the Chief Secretary. I take it to have been, so far as external manifestations were concerned, one of the most complete ever brought about in the history of Executive Government. It was a marvellous reduction. I will now quote figures. The number of agrarian offences with which Lord Spencer had to deal was quoted as between 4000 and 5000, and it was reduced, I believe, to a figure below 1000. But Lord Spencer did not think by that reduction he had made any way towards solving the Irish problem. And not only he did not think so, but the Tories did not think so. So far were they from recognising in Lord Spencer's action a satisfactory condition of things as an argument for maintaining coercion, that they declared that the policy of coercion had failed, and ought to be abandoned. I know the right hon. gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division said that he never approved the abandonment of the policy of Lord Spencer, for he thought that the policy of coercion ought to be maintained. The right hon. gentleman nods his head; but his disapproval was an extremely cheap disapproval, because the right hon. gentleman shared the spoils of the victors, and took office from the Government which disapproved of that policy. But what we contend is that the diminution of agrarian offences does not solve the Irish Question. What is the situation? What is the general condition of Ireland now? Ireland is in the hands of three powers—the Army, the Constabulary, and inferior tribunals of justice—tribunals which I do not hesitate in describing as inferior after

the specimen we have had to-night; and no country in that condition by the side of a great and powerful State can be said to have made the least progress towards a satisfactory settlement. We, whose Empire rests upon the goodwill and affection of every other people of which it is composed, ought to blush up to our eyes when we find that Ireland is only to be kept by such means as those which the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has described as a slow progress towards the solution of the Irish Question. I should like to know whether the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has considered the position of the Constabulary. In many respects I look with very great respect on the history of the Constabulary. On most occasions they have performed their duty admirably well, making allowance for all difficulties; but I am by no means sure that that position is not getting undermined. I put this question to the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues—Have not collisions between the Constabulary and the people, have not the occasions upon which the Constabulary have resorted to force in their dealings with the people, been more numerous within the last twelve months than they have been for a long, long period before? Will the right hon. gentleman give us a Return stating the number of cases in which, during the last twelve months, the police have used their batons, and other Returns with respect to the use of their batons during other periods? I own I am not without apprehension that something like exasperation has grown up in the minds of the people with respect to the action of this force. At any rate, I think there is evidence which must lead one to wish that the Government could emphatically deny any such a suggestion, and can assure us that the relations between the Constabulary and the people at large are as good as they have been at other periods. I never heard until within the last twelve months or thereabouts that shopkeepers were refusing to serve them. That may be a small thing in amount, but it is menacing and ominous in its character. I confess, so far as I can judge of it, and owing to the action of the Government we can judge of it only very imperfectly, the position of the Constabulary shows that the

progress of which the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaks is a progress not forwards, but backwards, as to the solution of the Irish Question. What are the evidences of failure on the other hand? The right hon. gentleman has, I think, a difficult task before him when he has to meet the charges of the hon. Member for North-East Cork, who in February last defied the Government to contradict his statement that the Plan of Campaign was still holding its ground. Does the Plan of Campaign still hold its ground? You have been distinctly challenged to-night to say whether you can point out an instance in which the two great powers, the Government and the landlords, have triumphed over the Plan of Campaign. The National League, we were told some time ago, was a thing of the past; but it is now described by the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer as full of great vigour in every quarter of Ireland. I am told that the right hon. gentleman used the word "ubiquitous" also. Well, what has been their success with regard to the great purpose of this bill? The charge of my right hon. friend near me was that this Bill was introduced for the purpose of promoting and bringing about the collection of rent in Ireland, and for the occupation of derelict farms. These are the two tests of the success of the Bill, and it will not be denied that they were the great objects of the measures. Nothing has been said, nothing has been told us, about the occupation of derelict farms, though something has been told us about the collection of rents. I will not quote the words used by the right hon. gentleman on a former occasion in this House, but I think I do not misrepresent their general effect when I say that in general the landlords of Ireland would be happy to get rents even such as were offered by the Plan of Campaign, but that in most cases rent could not be collected. These are evidences of failure which, it seems to me, infinitely outweigh the assertions of slow and partial success made by the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Now, Sir, I should like to know this: The right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has challenged



the words of this Motion. Does he think that the respect for law has increased among the people of Ireland generally since the enactment of the Crimes Act? Does he think that the estrangement of the people of Ireland, which is so much to be lamented, not from the people of England, but from the system of government enforced upon them—does he think that the estrangement has diminished? He does not seem ready to accept either of these challenges.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—I do not wish to interrupt the right hon. gentleman, and would not interrupt him but for his invitation. The statement in the Resolution is that we are undermining a respect for the law which did not exist, and are estranging the affections of the people of Ireland which we did not possess, during the time when the right hon. gentleman was in Office.

MR GLADSTONE—What the right hon. gentleman has said does not in the slightest degree touch either of my challenges. My question was not whether respect for law existed or did not exist, or in what degree, or what estrangement there had been or was not. My challenge was this. I believe now very strongly that the right hon. gentleman does not believe that respect for law has increased since the passing of the Crimes Act in the minds of the people at large, and that he does not believe that the people at large are less estranged now than before the passing of the Crimes Act.

MR GOSCHEN—I do not wish again to interrupt the right hon. gentleman, but he is attributing to me sentiments which I do not entertain. The right hon. gentleman interprets my silence as assent. I dissent entirely from his statement. I believe there has been increased respect for law, and I believe that we should have begun to diminish the estrangement but for the persistent efforts of the right hon. gentleman.

MR GLADSTONE—Of all the practices of a Government in difficulties there is none so shabby as throwing upon the Opposition responsibility for the state of public affairs in Ireland. They are in office; they have the whole powers of the State, and they can do what they please; they have got an

arbitrary Act in their power. They have sent to prison all these people; and with all the power in their hands, what is the meaning of saying that the Opposition—not the Liberal Party, but a wing of the Liberal Party—is responsible for the state of things which exists? What I say to the contradiction of the right hon. gentleman is this. Against his assertion of success I have given him proofs of failure, and so far as the estrangement is concerned—against the increasing estrangement from the injustice of the present system of government we have brought into action another powerful influence in diminishing the estrangement of the affections of the Irish people—within the last two years we have revived in their minds a confidence with which they believe the people of this country will put an end to whatever wrongs they still suffer. What we think is this, that there never was a period when the opposition was so sharply manifested between what is known as Dublin Castle and the people of Ireland. On the one hand, if you look at Ireland you will see the Government and its agents—powerful agencies, powerful political agencies, judicial agencies, and social agencies. On the other side you see the mass of the population, and every organ for the expression of opinion over which the mass of the population have influence, the representatives of the people in this House, and the representatives of the people—a rather high class of people—in Municipal Corporations, and in almost every elective body, there are returned men from whom rise a unanimous chorus of protestation against the system on which the government is now carried on in Ireland. Nothing has been more striking in this respect than the fact, as we are told, that nineteen Members out of the eighty-six Members who represent the National feeling have been sent to prison since the passing of the Crimes Act. Do you consider how grave that is? There was a time, sir, in the history of this country, when a Bill was introduced limiting the prerogative of the Crown in making additions to the Peerage. They were to be reduced to a fixed number. On the occasion of that Bill Sir Robert Walpole said that in the history of this country the road to the Temple of Honour had theretofore lain through the Temple of

Virtue, but it was now to lie—I believe that was the substance of his statement—through the dark paths of political intrigue. I do not think Sir Robert Walpole foresaw what would be the case of Ireland in 1888 with respect to the Temple of Honour. What in Ireland is now, in the hands of the present Government, the mode of access to the Temple of Honour? We have either reached, or we are coming very near to, a state of things in which, in the estimation of the Irish nation, the road to the Temple of Honour lies through the prison door. Nineteen Members of Parliament have been put into prison within twelve months, and the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer talks about progress towards the solution of the Irish problem. What does he think has been the effect of those imprisonments on the constituents of those nineteen Members? Were you to give us the power of access to our constituencies, every one of those nineteen Members, I venture to say, would be returned to this House with greater enthusiasm and larger majorities, because they have been the object of the wrath of the Government that now exists. Now, sir, in making this motion, we pay a debt of honour to the Government. I admit that we in this House should make known at least, if we cannot set forth in all particulars, the substance of the accusation we have to make against them, and which we intend to make against them in the country. We deal, sir, as my right hon. friend said, as in former years, with the nation, and not merely with the House,—we have an appeal which the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues cannot take away from us. To that tribunal we will go, and the verdict of that tribunal we can foresee, and we are satisfied with it, and we rejoice in the sentence which we know it will and cannot but pronounce.

# THE CHANNEL TUNNEL

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 27, 1888

Sir Edward Watkin, the member for Hythe, moved the Second Reading of the Channel Tunnel (Experimental Works) Bill. It was opposed by the Government, and rejected by 307 to 165.

THE appeal which has been made to me by the right hon. gentleman the President of the Local Government Board<sup>1</sup> is a very fair appeal. He has a right to know, and I will endeavour to explain to him why, having been at the head of the Government in 1884, and having voted against proceeding with the Channel Tunnel Bill, I do not take the same course on the present occasion. The right hon. gentleman has spoken for the Government to which he belongs; and, so far, he is in the same position as was my right hon. friend the Member for West Birmingham<sup>2</sup> when, in 1885, he asked the House to put a negative upon the Bill. But the right hon. gentleman will at once perceive the broad and vital difference between the speech which he has now made in stating the grounds for his proceeding and the speech which was then made by my right hon. friend. The right hon. gentleman has opposed the Channel Tunnel Bill, I am sorry to say, upon its merits—upon grounds which will be as good in any future year as they are at the present moment. My right hon. friend the Member for West Birmingham is not in the House, but I have had within the last week or ten days an opportunity, through his kindness, of going over the whole ground and testing our several recollections, and I believe I am correct in saying that in the speech of my right hon. friend there was not one word condemnatory of the Channel Tunnel upon its merits, and that his opposition was an opposition of time, and of time only. For

<sup>1</sup> Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

<sup>2</sup> Mr J. Chamberlain.

my part, I could not have taken then any other position, and I will presently state why it was that I was a party to opposition on that ground. It is a matter of justice to the hon. Member for Hythe<sup>1</sup> and to the promoters of the Channel Tunnel, after what happened in 1884 and 1885—I believe these were the years, though I am not certain that I am absolutely correct—that I should explain the view which I took of their case, and the reasons which induced me at that period, without any doubt or hesitation, to join in the opposition to the progress of the Bill. I am very glad to think, after the debate of last night, that we are now engaged in a discussion of a very different kind. I do not think that any person who agrees with me will be induced to vote against the Government from any desire to displace it, or that any gentleman who will vote with the Government will do so upon the ground that this is one of the sacrifices required from them to protect the country against the danger of a Liberal invasion of the Benches opposite. On the other hand, I am afraid that our arguments in this matter on the one side and on the other are looked upon as singularly unsatisfactory by our opponents. On political questions we often feel that, at any rate, there is something in what the other man says; but on this occasion we seem to get at the ultimate principles and modes of thinking which are fixed on one side and fixed on the other, and which would lead us, if we used the language that occurs to us, to describe the opposite arguments in very disrespectful terms. The right hon. gentleman has stated his case with force, clearness, and ability; and yet I frankly own—and frankness is, after all, a great virtue—the whole of the considerations he has advanced, and his arguments against this Tunnel are neither better nor worse than mere and sheer bugbears. Having gone thus far in the exercise of frankness, I will for the rest of my speech endeavour to fall back on the virtue of courtesy; and I will not recur to the use of any language of that character, by which I only meant to illustrate the position in which we stand to one another, and which we unhappily aggravated in 1884. Now, sir, this subject was first

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Watkin.

introduced to me by a Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was first introduced to me in the year 1865 by a gentleman whose name will always be mentioned with respect in this House—I mean Mr Ward Hunt. He was not Chancellor of the Exchequer at that exact time, for I was. He came to me as the leader of a deputation, and endeavoured to induce—or perhaps I should say seduce—me, the Chancellor of the Exchequer to Lord Palmerston, into giving my support to the promotion of this dangerous project. Mr Ward Hunt was totally insensible of the dreadful nature of the petition he was making—notwithstanding his position in the Conservative Party, he was totally unaware of all the dangers that have been pointed out by the right hon. gentleman opposite.

And here, sir, I am obliged to correct a statement of my hon. friend the Member for Hythe, who, on the authority of somebody or another, alleged that I alone among the Ministers of that day was disposed to give a guarantee in some shape or other to the promoters of the project. I was never disposed to give a guarantee to the extent of one single farthing to the promoters of this scheme, or any other scheme of a similar kind. I find it necessary, for my own credit, perhaps, at any rate for the truth of history, to disclaim it. Sir, I was instructed on behalf of the Government, and with my own full concurrence, to refuse a guarantee; but we did so without giving the slightest indication of any opposition to the Tunnel scheme. A series of other Governments followed, and every one of those Governments officially committed itself on the merits of the Tunnel. Lord Granville on the part of the Government of 1868; Lord Derby on the part of the Government of 1874, and, I think, the senior Lord Derby, the distinguished Prime Minister of a former period, expressed precisely similar sentiments; and every one of those Governments, acting unanimously, was engaged so far in the promotion of this project that they gave it their unequivocal sanction. Nor did they stop there, but they entered upon international proceedings. Communications were established with France. A Commission was appointed on the part of the two countries; and I do wish to

day—that is to say, public opinion manufactured in London by great editors, and clubs, who are at all times formidable, and a great power for the purposes of the moment, but who are a greater power and become an overwhelming power when they are backed by the threefold forces of the military and literary authorities, and the social circles of London.

Well, Sir, these powers among them created at that period such a panic that even those who were most favourable to the Tunnel, of whom I was one, thought it quite vain to offer a direct opposition. We, therefore, proposed the appointment of a Joint-Committee; and the issue of that Joint-Committee has been very fairly stated by the right hon. gentleman. I am bound to make a fair admission—and I do it in the presence of my noble friend the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire,<sup>1</sup> whose opinion at the time I do not now remember—that, although in the Government of 1868, to which he and I belonged, there never was a question as to the propriety of the Tunnel, and Lord Granville wrote in that sense, and even instituted communications with France; yet when we come to the Government of 1880, and the circumstances of 1881, 1882, and 1883, a change of opinion did find its way even into the Cabinet. Some of us were what I should call not quite sound and others of us were, and we all agreed that the best thing we could do was to refer the matter to this impartial tribunal. And when that tribunal reported, there was no improvement in the circumstances. If I am asked why, under these circumstances, I took part in throwing out the Channel Tunnel Bill, my answer is that we, the Government, were engaged in arduous affairs. Powers were put very freely into action against us at that time which are now happily in abeyance. We deemed that it was our duty to have some regard to the time of Parliament. We knew it was impossible to pass the Bill. It was a time of tempest; and, as sensible men in time of tempest are not satisfied with the shelter of an umbrella, and seek shelter under the roof of some substantial building, so we acted. Whether or not we ought to have shown more hero-

<sup>1</sup> The Marquis of Hartington.

ism I do not know. But we thought it idle to persevere in a hopeless struggle. We did not in the least condemn the Tunnel on its merits. We did not think there was the slightest chance of proceeding with the Bill to the end, and we therefore invited Parliament not to bestow its time on a discussion which we believed to be perfectly useless. That was the principle on which we proceeded at the time. I will say a little upon the arguments of the right hon. gentleman: but I am not going to attempt to follow those arguments, as if we were engaged in a debate like that of last night. I do not think it would be expedient or convenient to make this a debate between both sides of the House. There are some on this side of the House who are probably unsound beside those who are usually so; and I hope there are some on that side who are sound; and, therefore, the House is totally without prejudice. But there is one thing which fell from the right hon. gentleman which I regret, and that was his comparison between the internal condition of France at the present time and the internal condition of France some six or seven years ago. I own I think it was an error to enter upon that chapter of the subject, even if the right hon. gentleman entertains the opinion which he apparently does entertain. But as he has said that he thinks there is not the same prospect of stability in France now as then, I must give myself the satisfaction so far of expressing quite a different opinion. And I may remind the Government and the House of this—that the French Republic never, since 1870, has been called upon to pass through so severe a crisis as the crisis, not yet, I think, twelve months old, with respect to the appointment of a President. That was the most trying experience which it has had to go through, and it made many of its friends and well-wishers tremble as to the issue. It made every sound and right-minded man in France apprehensive of what was to happen; and I rejoice to say that France and the institutions of France came through the struggle with as much calm temper and solidity as any country in the world could have done.

That is one thing I feel it right to say in consequence of what fell from the right hon. gentleman. Follow-



ing the right hon. gentleman opposite, I do not touch on the engineering question. Neither will I touch upon the commercial question, except to say frankly that I differ from the right hon. gentleman, and I believe the commercial advantages of this Tunnel would be enormous. I have nothing whatever to do with engineering or commercial questions. I am here simply as a Member of Parliament to see whether there is any reason why I should withhold my assent to the plan. Now, Sir, I have used the familiar illustration of the umbrella as shelter in a storm. After hearing the speech of the right hon. gentleman, I am not quite sure whether the storm is still going on; but I was under the impression that the panic had passed away. My impression has been, and in the main my impression is that the literary alarm and the social alarm, which backed up the military alarm, are very greatly allayed, and that we have now, what we had not five or six years ago, a chance of a fair, temperate, and candid discussion. The right hon. gentleman refers to a land frontier as if it were an unmixed evil. No doubt it is less secure, upon the whole, than a sea frontier; but he must not forget that a land frontier has enormous advantages with respect to intercourse between man and man, which are of great consequence in the view of those who believe that peace, and not war, is the natural and proper condition of mankind; and it is to be as we trust to a great extent for this country, at least, the ordinary normal and habitual condition in which we live with foreign countries. But on the question of procuring a land frontier, if it is a land frontier, which I do not think it is, the habitual and standing advantages of a land frontier are enormous compared with its occasional disadvantages and dangers.

With regard to the political and military objections, I must say I feel pained, as an Englishman, in considering the extensive revolution of opinion that has taken place. For twenty years this project lived and flourished, difficult in an engineering sense, very difficult in a technical sense, and as a financial question. I do not presume to enter upon those questions, and I leave them to those who better

understand them—but with no doubt cast on it from the point of view of the security of this country. Now, Sir, a transition from darkness to light has taken place—and it ought to be hailed, notwithstanding all the inconveniences which accompany such transitions—and it is rather a serious question for us to consider whether the English nation and Government from 1860 to 1880, or whether the influences which acted during the years 1883-4 and 1885, and which are to some extent acting now, lead us in the right or wrong direction. Speaking of the dangers of a land frontier the right hon gentleman, in a lugubrious manner, said that this end of the tunnel must always be the subject of great anxiety. Well, if this end of the tunnel is to be the subject of great anxiety, what will the other end be? But, strange to say, I find that the other end of the tunnel is the subject of no anxiety at all. Many of us are in the habit of considering the French nation as light-minded, with great resources and great ingenuity, talents, and energy, but still light-minded, unlike ourselves, solid and stable, perhaps rather heavy, but at any rate a very steady-going people, who make up our minds slowly and resolutely, and do not change them. [Laughter.] Oh, I am not speaking for myself—I am only speaking on behalf of my country; but I would ask hon. gentlemen to apply this test to the case of the French people. I must say that they have treated this matter with the most dignified self-restraint and consistency throughout. I am bound to give my opinion, and I think the French, had they any other than the most friendly disposition with regard to ourselves, might have made serious complaints of the manner of their treatment in having been invited to embark in this enterprise to an extent only short of the signature of the Treaty when we receded from the ground, and left the light-minded people standing in exactly their original attitude, while we—not the nation, but the Government and the circles of opinion known in London—have very considerably altered. Well, but you will say, the question of our invading France is not a matter to be considered at all. Therefore, the other end of the tunnel does not seriously enter into the question. The real question that we have before us is

the likelihood of the coming of that unhappy day—I agree it is a perfectly possible thing, I think and hope it is nothing more than a possible event, still it must be taken into consideration—when England will be invaded by France. I am very much behind the age in a great many respects, and I am sorry to say very much behind those representatives of the age who sit on the opposite side of the House; for I have the habit of being guided to a certain extent in anticipations of the future by considerations of the past. I know that it is a mode of looking at a subject entirely dismissed from consideration at present. For about 800 years, beginning from the Conquest, I want to know which country has oftenest invaded the other, and I will state this proposition—that the invasions of France by England have been tenfold more than the invasions of the British Islands by France. Do you believe in a total revolution in the means of action between the two countries? I do not believe it. There has, indeed, been a great change in one matter—that of population. Now, Sir, during the Revolutionary wars what happened? The great Napoleon—the most wonderful general and strategist of modern times, the man of whom Dr Dollinger says that he raised war as to the mode of its planning and execution, not as to its morality, almost to the dignity and attitude of a fine art—addressed the whole of his resources and thoughts to the invasion of England. Ireland was tried three times by the Directory, and three times there were miserable failures. Two other fleets had set out, one from Holland and one from Spain, and they had been destroyed by the power of British arms at sea. But Napoleon made it a study nightly and daily to devise and arrange the means of invading England, and he was obliged to recede from it as an impossible task. Not that it is an impossible task. Do not suppose that I am going to say anything so extravagant. I am going to say this. It is worth while for those who have those portentous ideas of the power of France, and so small an idea of our means of defence, to consider the relative population of the two countries. At the time when Napoleon prosecuted his schemes the population of Great Britain was 10,000,000; the population of France 22,000,000.

I will not count the population of Ireland, for at that period, unfortunately, as at others, it added nothing to the military resources of this country for repelling invasion. Well, 10,000,000 Englishmen constituted the sum of those whom Napoleon had to invade, and he could not manage it. At the present moment this island contains far more than 30,000,000 men, not less strong, not less determined, not less energetic than the 10,000,000 in Napoleon's time at the beginning of the century, and they are close in mere numbers upon the population of France.

Here, then, are two countries, and the question is whether one will invade the other by means of the Channel Tunnel. This is a country that has incessantly invaded France, and I am not sorry to say that though we did it with marvellous success 500 years ago, we have not always been equally successful in recent years, though there is the paramount case of 1815, with respect to which, if a parallel case could be quoted on the other side for the action of England and Wellington, I would admit that there would be something more in the argument of the right hon. gentleman than I can allow that it contained as matters stand. I shall be told that Napoleon had no steam. That appears to be a strong argument, but it is capable of being used both ways. I believe that the invention of steam, and the great revolution that we have seen in shipbuilding, have enormously increased our means of defence as compared with those of France. I believe that our defensive power in times of crisis would develop itself with a rapidity, to an extent, and with an efficiency that would surpass all previous examples, and would astonish the world. There is one question that I should like to ask—What is the ground taken up by those gentlemen who point to our security as the main matter which we have to consider? Do they mean, on that ground, to limit our communications with France? Do they mean, as in the time of Queen Anne, to “abate” our trade with France, as being a source of danger and insecurity? “No,” says the right hon. gentleman opposite; “anything but it; extend your communications to the uttermost; give every facility by which men

and material"—for the word "goods" is synonymous with material—"can pass from one country to the other, but do not sanction the construction of this tunnel." That is the plan of the right hon. gentleman. He proposes that the harbours of the country should be enlarged. He set no limit to the range of his philanthropy and enlightened views upon this matter. He has no apprehension upon this subject. Well, my apprehension of invasion is not great; but, if I am to conjure up any prospect of danger, I tell the right hon. gentleman deliberately that his plan of harbours and great ships, and of making the Channel a high road to be crossed with wonderful rapidity, presents ten times the danger that the prospects of the tunnel could possibly present to the most excitable mind.

Now, one word about the opinion of the military authorities. I am not going to speak of them with contempt; on the contrary, I must say that I have the deepest respect for the profession of the soldier, and especially for the function of a commander in the field, charged with the care of large bodies of men, with the duty of making the most of the resources of the country, and with the enormously difficult task of bringing all to bear on a particular point, under particular circumstances, and at a particular time, for the purpose of war. That I deem to be one of the highest and most extraordinary trials to which the human mind can be subjected, and I do not know any other position in which the demand for energy and the exercise of every great quality of human force is so tremendous and overwhelming. Therefore, for the opinion of Lord Wolseley, whom I believe to be a man extremely valuable to his country in the great and possible contingency of military danger and military effort, I have the profoundest respect, as I have for the opinion of other military authorities. But that respect is mainly due in relation to the operations of war, or measures directly connected with the operations of war. On other matters not so connected their judgment carries weight, and always will carry weight; but in questions of this character the judgments of military authorities cannot be accepted as infallible, and we find that the prescriptions and recommendations of the military authorities of one

day or one year are disowned and reversed by the military authorities of another time. We were told in 1860 that Lord Palmerston's fortifications would give us such a state of security that we need never be alarmed again; but have we not had within these latter years alarms more poignant, more startling, more costly than, perhaps, were ever reached before in times of peace, and these fortifications are regarded apparently by those who recommended them with the greatest indifference? If I am asked to rely on the opinion of military authorities as infallible, and required to surrender my own poor judgment and responsibility into their hands, I would quote the name of Alderney. If there is a single creation on earth that may be called the creation of military authority it is the work now represented by the remains, the ruins, the shreds and tatters of the fortifications at Alderney. Save that the funds were supplied from the Treasury, these works were a military creation. I know it is sometimes said that all faults and imperfections in such cases are due to the impertinent interference of civilians; but what civilian had anything to do with the works at Alderney? I had to do with them in the sense of yielding to the imperative demands of the military authorities of that day, excellent, able, and highly distinguished men they were—Sir John Burgoyne, Sir Henry Hardinge, and others who adorn our military annals. They told us that with an expenditure of £150,000 Cherbourg would be sealed up, and no hostile fleet would ever issue from it. I was the man who proposed this expenditure, and the House agreed to it thirty-five years ago. But I need not say the matter did not stop there; the expenditure went up to £1,500,000—and I am not sure whether it stopped short of £2,000,000—and of that there now remain but the miserable fragments of that work, a monument of human folly, useless to us as regards any purpose for which we were urged by military authorities to adopt their plan, but perhaps not absolutely useless to a possible enemy, with whom we may at some period have to deal, and who may possibly be able to extract some profit in the way of shelter and accommodation from the ruins. Then take another and very different example from another

branch of the subject—I wish to speak of nothing but of which I have some personal knowledge. Everybody knows that in the crisis of a great war the one real and appalling difficulty, if not danger, of this country is the fewness of men, and not the scantiness of any other resources whatever. We were, until the forethought and sagacity of Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell relieved us of the task, in military occupation of the Ionian Islands. Our garrison there used to consist in times of peace of 6000 or 7000 men, and I believe it was admitted that, considered in reference to times of war and in reference to Reserves, such soldiers as we would require to have there would stand to our debit in time of war at not less than 12,000 men. I am not speaking of political considerations; but I do not think any man in this House will say it is desirable to be charged with the responsibility of maintaining 12,000 men in a time of a great war for the purpose of maintaining a hold, even if it were otherwise possible upon Corfu, Cephallonia, Zante, and the other Ionian Isles. But at that time military authorities were unanimous in their belief, and strongly urged upon the Government that the maintenance of our military hold upon the Ionian Islands was a great, if not an essential, element in the maintenance of our power in the Mediterranean. Something, we must admit, is to be allowed for the professional zeal of men who know no bounds to the service they render and the sacrifices they are prepared to make when the country has occasion to call for their services; but much also must be allowed for the fallibility of human judgment when applied to an object they consider it necessary to secure, and these are considerations which in some degree equalise our position, though not absolutely, to the position of the military authorities. It seems ludicrous for a person like myself to give an opinion on the military danger of the Channel Tunnel in the face of the opinion of military authorities; but I cannot get rid of the feeling—and it is simply common sense—that when I endeavour to consider all the points, which I will not now enter upon in detail, I am bound to point out that it is not a safe thing for us to say, “We have military authorities who tell us

this thing or that, and we ought to be satisfied," when, of necessity, we have before our eyes many exemplary cases where the predictions and injunctions of military authorities have been totally falsified; and when we know that what is preached by the military authorities of to-day is the direct reversal of what was thought and taught by military authorities twenty or thirty years ago. Under the circumstances, I trust we have arrived at a time of comparative calm, when the matter can be considered without prejudice, which was not possible in 1883. If I may presume to refer to an old and homely proverb, "Philip was then drunk;" but Philip is now, I trust, sober, and it is in the sobriety of Philip that I place all my confidence. I hope, Sir, I am not going beyond Parliamentary etiquette, if I express my hearty congratulations that you, Sir, in the midst of the storm and excitement, were one of the men who affixed a signature to the Minority Report on the subject. I believe even now we have arrived at a happier time, when the gallant enterprise—for I must call it so, arduous and difficult as it is—of my hon. friend the Member for Hythe has some chance of fair judgment. The opinion of the nation was never against it. A fictitious opinion, which is sometimes assumed to be national opinion, was too strong against it at one period, and it was too strong for me, and it even now exists, but weakened and brought within moderate bounds, and there is now some chance for common sense and the exercise of that spirit of enterprise that has been at all times among the noblest characteristics of our country.



# THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE

HAWARDEN, AUGUST 23, 1888

Mr Gladstone was present at the Hawarden Flower Show, and afterwards spoke from the Castle Terrace. Amongst speeches on cognate subjects may be mentioned those at Gillingham on June 17, 1889, on Agriculture; at Hawarden, on August 22nd, 1889, on Horticulture; and on Jan. 10, 1890, at Hawarden, to his tenantry.

THIS is not the first time I have addressed you on my own behalf and on behalf of my wife and family on the occasion of our Horticultural Show, and I rejoice to think that every year as it comes round we have greater and greater testimonies of the good that it does, the great interest that is felt in it, and the great exertions that are made by our friends to excel in the cultivation of fruit and flowers and vegetables. Now, I do not know whether I could tell you all the benefits that I think this does; but, in the first place, it is another bond of union between us. It brings us together upon a good footing, with kindly feelings for a good purpose; and everything that does that, in my opinion, is a very good thing. It is a great distinction of this country that we have plenty of usages of that kind, and the more we have of them the better, and I am delighted to think that this one in particular is being added to what we had before. But there is a great deal more to say about it, and more than one can say properly on the same occasion, because it would be better to keep something for a future occasion. The next thing is this—as regards flowers in particular, it is a very great advantage to people of all ranks and classes to have themselves kept in close connection with the beautiful things which God Almighty has ordained that Nature should produce—it cultivates the sense of beauty in the people. You, who live in the country, have advantages in that respect which are not possessed by the town population; and I do not know

whether it is fresh in your recollection that the town population in England, which, if we go some hundreds of years back, was not a twentieth part of the whole, is now actually more than half of the whole. It is a most touching thing, in driving through the poorest streets of London, to see how the feeling for natural beauties acts even upon the town population; how everybody that can contrives to have some flower pots, some geraniums, something or other that shall be to him the image of Nature, keeping up his recollection of Nature, and showing his sense of beauty. It is a real element of civilisation; it tends to soften and refine human nature; and, where there are so many things of interest in life which tend to influence human nature in another direction, it is an immense advantage that an influence of this kind should be brought to work among all classes of the population. If you go through the wealthy streets of London you will see splendid boxes of flowers in the fronts of the windows of the wealthy inhabitants. Those are very pleasing to the eye, and it is certainly nothing but creditable that those who purchase them should take delight in them; but that is a very simple and easy matter for the persons in opulent circumstances, compared with the little flower pots in the back streets; because the little flower pots in the back streets generally represent efforts made under difficulties and with self-denial. It is out of very narrow means, it is in the midst of serious want that these things are done; and most certainly I should always look upon them with the liveliest satisfaction. But then we may say that this is the imaginative side of the question, which has relation to taste and civilisation. The economical side of it, however, must always present itself to our minds. You delight in these beautiful things; but, after all, in the first place, you are almost compelled also to contemplate the subject with a view to profit. I want to say one or two things to you upon that subject.

And first let me say I think there are very few persons who know how large a question this is. In some degree it is a subject on which there are varieties of opinion; but there is an immense deal to be done in this country in small parcels, in small de-

tails, upon patches and limited areas of ground. To extend that by what I may in the rough call spade cultivation is a matter, regarded in the aggregate, of enormous national importance. You will understand that I use that phrase in a large sense, covering by it everything, in point of fact, that is done by the human hand in detail by minute care and constant watchfulness, and all the incidents of the weather and other circumstances; and here I must say I learnt with pleasure to-day, from the highest authorities, that this exhibition is the very best exhibition we have ever had; and, being the best, it is made under the most unfavourable circumstances, because I do not think that since this institution was founded we have ever had so ungenial a season. Therefore you have been struggling under adverse circumstances, and I rejoice to see that you have struggled successfully. Now, this is a very large question. If you go across the Channel into France, where the land is very much more subdivided than it is in this country, you will find there that what is called the small culture is pursued by millions of the population; and there is no doubt at all about the fact that a large part of the wealth of France arises from that kind of work, which some people think insignificant when they look at it in detail, but which when, as I have said, it is accumulated and put together comes to be of enormous national importance. Some thirty or forty years ago the landlords of this country had a most unfortunate passion for what was called consolidating farms, and they thought consolidation was the secret of good economical cultivation and of high rents, not as against the farmer, but of high rents, together with good circumstances for the farmer. Then some people went a little further, and thought also that machinery was going to produce in agriculture the same astonishing results that it has produced in manufactures. You know that in the staple manufactures of the country machinery has put down, and has driven out of the market, what used to be called hand labour. Now, with regard to the land, the landlords have had a great lesson, by which I have no doubt they will profit. They have gone through a very severe crisis in the last ten years, and it has been observed, per-

haps all through the country, that the small farms have done better than the large, or, at all events, as another way of putting it, that the large farms have done worse than the small. In a very great degree the circumstances have been terribly against large farms. But there was a great movement tending to remove all agricultural production away from the human hand. And this would tell most against the small farms. Well, this more favourable or less unfavourable experience of the small farms shows you that some arguments have been pushed too far, and that there is a great deal to be got out of the human hand,—using the spade and other implements, applying to the soil more effective processes of exposure to the air than can always be applied by agricultural machinery, and leading to your obtaining from the surface of the earth a far greater aggregate product than has ever yet been got, possibly than ever will be got, by scientific processes and by wholesale methods in agriculture.

A great many people are very much alarmed about over-population. I do not so much believe in over-population as many people do. I think that if the land is made the best use of, the result will be that it will feed a great many more people than when its resources are not properly turned to account; and I cannot too strongly state—my conviction may not be worth much, but at any rate it has been formed upon the observation of a tolerably long life—that I am persuaded there is an enormous economical importance in the subject that has brought us here to-day. I have in my hands a book called “The Producer and Consumer;” by Samuel Rawson. I had not seen this book when last I addressed you. It appears to me to be very interesting, and to deserve a good deal of attention. Mr Samuel Rawson describes himself as having been for more than thirty years a fruiterer and salesman in the fruit and vegetable trades, apparently in Birmingham, and he seems to be a person of consideration, because he dedicates his book, by permission, to the Company of Fruiterers, a public body; and no doubt that is a good testimonial to his being a person of real knowledge and experience. I shall send this copy of the book to the Institute for those to read who may like to read it, for

that would be turning it to better account than by keeping it on my own shelves. He tells you a number of things, some of them that are very remarkable, and some of them that are astonishing; but let me say one thing. There are some persons who say when you refer to France, or when you refer to a district like the Channel Islands, where there is an enormous population relatively to the acreage, and the people are, generally speaking, extremely well off,—they all say, “Well, but they have beautiful climates.” But our climate is not a bad climate. There may be more enjoyment and brilliancy in the Mediterranean climate than there is in ours; but it is commonly said, and I believe it, though I do not want to apply it to this day particularly, that there are more days in the year on which you can enjoy the open air in England than in most countries in Europe. We have not got the worst extremes; and, I do not know whether you have observed it, but, although we have been grumbling at the rain for the last month or six weeks, if you read the papers you will see that both east and west of us they have had worse weather than we have had. You will see terrible accounts of storms and of ruin produced by storms in Austria, and this very morning we have had some terrible accounts from America; so that, after all, I am not at all sure that we are not as well off. We have here a medium climate, a temperate climate, a healthy climate, a climate that is good for many kinds of productions. The climate is not always the thing. There are many varieties of climate, and it is not always the one that is thought the best that does the best. A county that is supposed to be one of the poorest, one of the least favourable and least genial climates in the whole island is Aberdeenshire, and there is not a more flourishing county in the whole island. The farmers of Aberdeenshire send to the London market the finest beef in the world; the farmers of Aberdeenshire send to the London corn market such oats that Aberdeen oats are known by that name because they cannot be equalled elsewhere, and they are generally used for mixing with other oats to bring up the quality; and, what is perhaps more to the purpose in this connection, is that Aberdeenshire people grow strawberries in enormous quantities

for the London market. I admit that they have the advantage of coming in a little later than other people; but they do it and make it pay. Great things are done in that way.

I will just mention to you one or two of the things that this gentleman refers to. Mind, I cannot undertake to aver that he is correct in everything. I have told you who he is, and what countenance he has, and he appears to command a great deal of information in detail. He gives an account of some things that are astonishing, and perhaps that ought to be considered as extreme cases. What do you think of this? "I have known an acre of strawberries making £200." Strawberries generally make a person's lips water, but to hear of an acre of strawberries making £200 may make other people's lips water in another sense. I do not know whether he means £200 net profit. I should think not; for in another place—I quote it from page 14—he describes the growth and the profit on strawberries in a particular season as making £40 an acre, which seems to be pretty well. He mentions a multitude of such subjects. One of them is the growth of tomatoes. I see there are some specimens of tomatoes in the show that we have beside us. He says:—"A very profitable fruit that grows is the tomato, especially as grown in Cornwall, Jersey, and Guernsey; but it grows here perfectly well. It will make 4d. per lb. at the lowest price, and meets with a ready sale in the market." They say that they packed, in the season of 1885, 80,400,000 cans of tomatoes. That is the scale upon which these things are done. The demand for articles offered, and for those articles of food which, in a mild sense, might be called luxuries, comforts, and many other necessaries, is enormous. You have got to deal with the human stomach; and the human stomach, whatever else may be said of it, is a very good customer. And you may rely upon its permanent demand. It is very difficult to say to what extent that demand may be further enlarged and magnified. The whole human race is not so well fed that it cannot take any more. There is a portion of society which is said to eat more than is good for it. I am sorry to say that about sixty years ago, in this country, there

were many millions of people who had less than ~~was~~ good for them, and could not get a sufficiency of food. There may be a handful of people still in that unfortunate condition, but the whole, I am happy to think, are a great deal better fed than they were. They have got the command of all the markets of the world. There is no impediment to their getting everything on the best terms that it can be grown for them; and so I trust it will always continue.

There is another question that does not come so strictly within the purpose of this institution, and that is the question of eggs. With regard to eggs, he mentions one case. There is nothing very wonderful about it, but it is not unsatisfactory. I take this particular case he mentions on page 29. A lady keeping from twenty to thirty fowls has recently kept a strict account of her poultry-feeding for a year, and the result was a profit of over £5. Five pounds is not a very large sum, but let us divide it among twenty-five fowls. If there were twenty-five fowls and £5, that would be £1 for every five fowls, or 4s. a year; so that every fowl makes a penny a week nearly. That is a very reasonable return. In Scotland they say, "Mony a mickle maks a muckle." That shows that upon this world of ours there is a sphere for everybody and for every creature to be useful in; and I think if every human being did his duty as well to himself and to society as a fowl that makes a penny a week—well, he would have a better account to give at the last than he will in some cases now. Here is another instance I will mention to you. This is an important consideration in the case of farming—that when the land is originally of poor quality, it will very often not be worth while to try to turn it to account for farming processes; but in the case of spade cultivation the thing is different, and it will often be worth while to turn to account for spade purposes what it is not worth while to turn to account for farming purposes. What you want for spade purposes, besides space and air, is the easy use and application to the soil of family labour. Thus the spade will make the land profitable; and though, of course, the original quality of the land is very important, yet it is not so

indispensable, and you may get a good deal out of indifferent land by spade process that you would never get, probably, by the ordinary processes of the plough and the harrow. Here is a case mentioned by Mr Rawson on page 17. He says, at a place near Bromsgrove, called Dodford, some years ago the land did not pay—not until ten years ago. How came it to pay then if it had not paid before? Because the tenants paid attention to the cultivation of strawberries, raspberries, and bush fruit, and it is now paying well. That is this poor land, which formerly did not pay at all. Upon a recent visit there which he took—I beg you to pay special attention to this—he found that many of the tenants had purchased their small farms out of the proceeds made from this industry. Do not suppose that this thing is to work magically. That is not so. It is a question of labour, of care, of skill, of vigilance. The thing will not come like a prize in a lottery. There are excellent results to be had, but they must be had by the use of proper means, and guarding in that way against the expectation of imaginary results. I must say I have had plenty of instances to show me that there is a great deal to be done, and that there is a field open to every man who has industry and a fair capacity; and it has pleased God to give to the average man fair capacity, if he will take care to add industry to it. There is a great deal to be done for the improvement of their circumstances, and the increase of the comforts of life. I once had—not very long ago—a present sent to me; it was a present, I think, of a box of jam, twelve pots of jam. The man who sent it said he had been a farmer in Essex of 250 acres of land, and that he had been brought to the point of ruin; but it had occurred to him to turn his attention to fruit cultivation, and he did so. He made great efforts, and got the capital by the formation of a company, and he told me it had become a most flourishing concern. As he had seen me among the preachers of the merits of this operation, he testified his gratitude by sending me a box of jam.

Now, about getting to market. There is no doubt that getting the produce to market is one of the most im-



portant subjects to which you can apply your attention. I dare say you have seen that there has been passed in the present Session of Parliament a Railway Rates Bill that is intended to assist the British agricultural producer in getting his produce to market. There has been a great deal of complaint against railway companies. Men speak, and Mr Rawson speaks, of the avarice of the railway companies; they are very wicked; there is a great deal of avarice among them. Now, I believe that the people who direct the railway companies are no better nor worse than the generality of mankind. I suppose they like to have as large dividends as they can get, and it must be admitted that their dividends are not generally very large. I do not believe—you know it is a curious thing in the history of the world, but I do not believe that in any portion of the economical history of this country you could find a case where there has been such a vast investment of money or anything approaching it—now exceeding eight millions sterling—for such moderate returns as is the case of the railway companies. However, I do not mean to say that the intelligence of the railway companies is always perfect, or the administration always enlightened: but, on the whole, I think they show a great deal of skill. They are a great deal in the public eye, for what they do is very much canvassed, and they ought to understand their interests pretty well, though I am extremely glad Parliament has passed an Act on the subject, and if there is any tendency on their part to do injustice to the British producer, it is quite right that that tendency should be checked.

But I want to call your attention to a practical point. I do not believe that the avarice of the railway companies is the great reason why the British producer cannot get his fruit, his vegetables, his grain, hay, straw, and so forth to market; and I do not believe that the railway companies are governed, as some people think them to be, by a portentous and unnatural desire to bring foreign produce into this country cheap, and to make English produce dear. Rely upon it, that is not the secret. I have my own opinion as to the secret. It may not be worth much, but I give it you. My opinion is this—that the reason

why the undeniable fact occurs that the foreign producer in many instances gets his produce to market cheaper relatively is this: that the foreign produce is collected and brought in such large quantities, and is sent in great masses to the market. That is the secret of cheap carriage. Now, unfortunately, we have not got those combinations in England; and I believe the farmers could do themselves a great deal of good, and I believe the garden cultivators can do themselves a great deal of good, by the process that is described as laying your heads together. Now, laying your heads together is a phrase that has been used in various senses, and I am anxious that I should not be misunderstood. Sixty years ago there was a most witty clergyman in this country, Sydney Smith, a canon of St Paul's in London, and in those days the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's were what they are now—rather slow. If any of you go to London and stay there, you cannot be there long without knowing that St Paul's is a great working church and a great institution in London; but then, though it was open on Sundays and week days, in some way or other very little was known about it, and the Dean and Chapter were slow. Now, Sydney Smith used to enjoy himself by passing his wit and jokes upon this Dean and Chapter, though he belonged to it himself. When wooden pavements—an excellent improvement, I think—when wooden pavements began to be introduced into London, there was a question of laying down wooden pavements round St Paul's, and somebody raised the question whether it could be done—whether they could get a wooden pavement to lay all round it. Sydney Smith said, "There is no difficulty at all; let the Dean and Chapter lay their heads together." That was a very good wooden pavement. But it is not in that sense, it is in a contrary sense, that I invite you to lay your heads together. I ask you to lay your heads together in order that the brains within those skulls may enter into communion with one another; for I am persuaded that it is by communication that the farmers and garden producers can contrive to cope with those most serious grievances, most serious inconveniences, those formidable impediments which prevent the produce from getting into the

market, and which discourage its being produced at all, because it is sent in such small parcels that the railway companies cannot afford to carry it except at large relative expense. You will easily see that where it is a question of tons, whether of potatoes or cabbages, or of coals, the carrying of tons at a time can be done far cheaper relatively to the quantities than where it is a question of carrying pounds at a time. How are you to bring the pounds into tons? By bringing a number of producers together to see how they can lay together the several stocks that they get out of their ground, and thereby putting themselves in a position to say to the railway companies, "We shall provide ourselves at such times and in such quantities, and you will bring them to market for us:" and the railway companies, having as many eyes in their heads as other people, if it paid them to carry the produce, would offer moderate terms for the carriage. This gentleman, who seems to know a good deal of what he writes about, says that a very good plan would be to hire a truck. I think he says that that used to be an old method. I am sure I do not know whether he is right or not in that, but he suggests that a certain number of persons should hire a truck, pay so much for it, and then put upon it, subject to the regulations of the company, what kind of produce they like, so as to have perfect freedom in it. I do not know whether that is so or not. What I feel is, that to bring the produce to market at regular times and in considerable quantities is the true secret of cheapness and expedition in conveyance. Everything depends upon cheapness and expedition in conveyance. See how wonderfully the commerce of the world is increased. Everywhere the business of communication, the business of sending people, and the business of sending goods and articles from one place to another is every year coming to form a larger and larger proportion of the whole business of human life. And why is that? Because the methods of doing it wholesale, to bring it in quantity, are more and more studied; because conveyance, which after all is an article in the market, is in that way becoming cheaper, and causes more things to be conveyed.

Now, gentlemen, and ladies too—for I must not forget the ladies at any time, much less to-day, because I find that it is Mrs Johnson of Mancott Bank who has distinguished herself in the show of the present year in a manner which entitles her to the highest honour—I have endeavoured in a familiar way to approach this question, so far as I was able, in a practical manner. We shall meet again from year to year, I hope, during the time that my life and the time that my wife's life may be prolonged, and after we are gone, well, then I hope that my son, Mr W. H. Gladstone,<sup>1</sup> and his wife, and after them our grandson, may carry on these meetings for, I trust, fifty or sixty years. But we are not likely to live for a hundred years yet. All of us are obliged to the committee, to the judges, and to the treasurer for the manner in which they have laboured for the success of the show. You will be glad to hear that I have done; for, as I said before, we must keep something to be said next time, and I only therefore repeat my hearty and cordial congratulations to you on the success you have attained, and the expression of my hope that the success you have attained may be regarded only as a stimulus to greater exertions in future; and I venture even to hope that you will reflect upon those things that I have said about combination, about measures for bringing your produce easily and rapidly to market. And that reminds me the word "market" brought up a new idea in my mind, and that is that I am happy to say you are likely to have much greater facility of access to market than you have had. You are aware of the railway that has been made through the parish, and of the bridge that is being made over the Dee, and that there is a plan for making a railway from the Dee Bridge to Birkenhead. You are aware that there is a tunnel under the Mersey at Birkenhead. All these things, I hope, within certainly the next two years, will be joined one to another, and the meaning of that is that all your fruit, and vegetables, and flowers, and whatever you can rear that is worth sending to market, can be sent straight by rail from a station in the middle of Hawarden, will be able to be sent by rail in the course of

<sup>1</sup> Mr W. H. Gladstone died July 4th, 1891.

perhaps an hour's or half-an-hour's conveyance to Liverpool—that is to say, into a market of 700,000 people. That is not a discouraging circumstance, so I hope you will be stimulated more and more to exertion, and that you will likewise consider whether you cannot do something among yourselves to procure better terms from the railway companies, to put them in a position to carry for you larger quantities, and therefore to carry your goods at a cheaper rate.

# THE EISTEDDFOD

WREXHAM, SEPTEMBER 4, 1888

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Mr Gladstone delivered this speech as a visitor to the Eisteddfod at Wrexham.

THERE was no single sentence in the excellent address of our chairman<sup>1</sup> to-day more important than that in which he said that on the present occasion we had no politics within these precincts. I ask no man and no woman what his or her politics are, and I trust that no gentleman or lady will ask me anything about mine. Until I get out of Wrexham I shall forget them altogether. Those who have been with me to what, following Parliamentary usage, I probably had best call another place, will understand and know the meaning of my illustration when I say that, on this particular occasion, in coming among you again, I feel I have passed from a more doubtful into a far purer atmosphere. I do assure you that, although many are more competent to speak to you about your Eisteddfod than I am, there is no man in or out of Wales, Welshman or no Welshman, that can do it with a more entire heart than mine. I do not come here to meet a public feeling, I come here to express a most sincere conviction. I rejoice in this institution, and I rejoice in witnessing its progress. The last time I had the honour of addressing an Eisteddfod was in the town of Mold<sup>2</sup>; and, according to my recollection, the audience before whom I have now the honour to appear is not less than three-fold that which I then addressed. I see that the Eisteddfod is taking hold in an increasing degree—I will not say upon the masses of the people, because I think they have always given it sympathy, but upon all classes of the community, and is more and more fulfilling the idea of that which I have seen officially called a Welsh national institution. Let me tell you that I

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Watkin.

<sup>2</sup> August 20, 1873.

underwent an uncomfortable sensation for a moment—do not be alarmed—when, arriving in this room, I found myself placed within a yard of what was evidently the most powerful and effective military band, and I said to myself, “I am very fond of music, and I am very loyal to Welsh music; but really this is rather too close.” But when the band began—I do assure you that if they had been playing till this moment, if their lungs could have stood it, and for ever so much longer, I should have listened to it with unmixed delight. I had not read the official description of it, but the thought that came into my mind was, “This is so good a band, that it surely must be a Welsh band;” and I was delighted to find, on asking for information, which, in the Welsh portion of the book kindly handed to me, I had difficulty in gathering with as much certainty as I could have wished—I was glad to find I was right in that supposition. I hope I have not come here to flatter you, but the musical talent and the musical feeling of Wales have always had my unmixed and enthusiastic admiration. Think, ladies and gentlemen, of your “Men of Harlech.” In my judgment, for the purpose of a national air—I do not speak of science, for I am not possessed of it—but for the purpose of a national air, and without disparagement of old “God save the Queen” or anything else, it is perhaps the finest national air in the world. As to the band that played to-day, I wish to tender to them my cordial thanks, and to say that, in my opinion, they are a band worthy even to play the “Men of Harlech.” I am not here to select the Welsh professors of this art and that art, but I am reminded by what I have just said of music, to refer to a sister art, and to congratulate you upon possessing, in the sister art of painting, a representative of Wales, who is among the most ardent of all Welshmen—and that is saying a good deal, for Welshmen are not deficient in the faculty of ardour—among the most ardent of them all, at the same time that he is one of the most illustrious of our living painters—there may be those who would place him quite at the top of the tree, I do not exaggerate in the words I use—Mr Burne Jones.

I have not come here to speak simply of individuals, and I will

pass on to say that I have been struck within the last few hours, I will not say with the contrast, but, on the contrary, with the remarkable concord between things that are young and things that are old. I have come this morning from Hawarden by the Hawarden loop line to the Hawarden Junction, and from the Hawarden Junction to Wrexham. I hope I may come many times; but I take this opportunity of rendering my acknowledgments to Sir E. Watkin, who has exhibited to you the intelligence and the zeal and the liberality with which he has applied himself, as a great railway constructor and director, to the consideration of the wants of Wales. I express to him personally my share in the obligation, and I congratulate Wales on the close alliance which I hope will for the future subsist between him and her for the promotion of the great enterprises to which we must look for the opening up of the country. That is not all of what I have seen to-day. I saw great enthusiasm all the way from Hawarden. People of all ages and of both sexes gathered at every station with an unusual number, I think, of Welsh babies. The enthusiasm of the babies it would be premature to describe—that is all reserved for the future; but the appearance of those babies showed the enthusiasm of the mothers. Now this conjunction of young and the old—I mean the new and the ancient—is, in my opinion, the happiest augury for the well-being of a country. A country is in a good and sound and healthy state when it exhibits the spirit of progress in all its institutions and in all its operations; and when with that spirit of progress it combines the spirit of affectionate retrospect upon the times and the generations that have gone before, and the determination to husband and to turn at every point to the best account all that these previous generations have accumulated of what is good and worthy for the benefit of us their children.

That I take to be the object and the purpose of this Eisteddfod, which is a commemoration of the past. There are some who say that its purpose is a mistake; and, although I do not know whether there are any to be found in Wales who say so now, there used to be people who said that its purpose is a mistake; and I



recollect the time when it was the custom among many, while recognising the noble feeling which had organised the Eisteddfod, to deplore it as an economical error, and to deplore the maintenance of the Welsh language, and say, "Let us have one language, one speech, and one communication." I do not intend to enter at full length into the question; but I must own that I have not heard or found that Welshmen, when they go into England, ever lose their attachment to their native land; and I have not found that they are placed at any undue disadvantage in consequence of the attachment, although it embraces and regards as the centre of Welsh life the tongue that is spoken by the people. But I wish to say what, perhaps, will shock some men—what shall I call them?—some who would call themselves, at any rate, "nineteenth century" men. I wish to say that, in my opinion, the principle of nationality and the principle of reverence for antiquity—the principle of what I may call local patriotism—is not only an ennobling thing in itself, but has a great economic value. That, perhaps, may seem a bold statement, but, in my opinion, it is a true one. Everybody feels, I think, the first portion of it to be true—namely, that it is of an ennobling character. The attachment to your country, the attachment among British subjects to Britain, but also the attachment among Welsh-born people to Wales, has in it, in some degree, the nature both of an appeal to energy and an incentive to its development, and, likewise, no few elements of a moral standard; for the Welshman, go where he may, will be unwilling to disgrace the name. It is a matter of familiar observation that even in the extremest east of Europe, wherever free institutions have supplanted a state of despotic government, the invariable effect has been to administer an enormous stimulus to the industrious activity of the country. That is the case wherever we go; and, in my opinion, as I think, with that sense of your Welsh birth, and what you yourselves call your Welsh nationality—if it tends to the general healthy development of the man, and if it makes him more of a man than he would be without it, it would make him not only morally but economically a man of greater value than

he otherwise would be. Now, this is a day of retrospect, and, having spoken of Welsh nationality, I am reminded to look towards that inscription which you see upon a portion of your walls, and which bears the name of Henry Richard<sup>1</sup>—a name than which there can be no better symbol of Wales. I had the honour of knowing him for the last twenty years, if not more, and I have always been glad to take occasion of saying that I regarded him in respect of the conduct, character, faculties, and hopes of the people of Wales, as a teacher and a guide. I have owed to him much of what I have learned about Wales as my experience has enlarged, and I owe a debt to him on that account which I am ever glad to acknowledge. But, gentlemen, he has broader claims upon you. He has upon you the claim of having exhibited to the world a model of character, of sympathy, and delight. I have seen him in Parliament, the advocate of decided opinions, the advocate of some opinions, perhaps among the best he entertained—for instance, in respect to peace—in which he had no great number of sympathisers or followers. I have seen him always uniting a most determined courage and resolution in the assertion of his principles and views with the greatest tenderness, gentleness, and sympathy towards those who differed from him. The fact is, though I do not wish unnecessarily and officiously to introduce here considerations so solemn that perhaps they are better reserved in the main for another place—the fact is there was in him what I may call an inner place, which was the secret of his outward self-command, and of his gentleness, as well as of his courage. It was impossible to see him without seeing that he was not only a professor of Christianity, but that his mind was a sanctuary of Christian faith, of Christian hope, and of Christian love; and all those great powers and principles radiated forth from the centre, and let his light shine before men, though he himself would have been the last either to assert or to recognise that there was in him any kind or degree of merit of his own. I know his name will long be remembered and ever be revered among you, and I am glad to

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Merthyr Tydfil, a prominent member of the Peace Society, and Welsh educationalist; he died in August 1888.

have had the opportunity of paying to him this brief and imperfect, but hearty and sincere, tribute of admiration and respect.

We are bound on this occasion to go a little further back, and to consider what Wales is and what Wales has been. As Sir Edward Watkin so well said, she represents the concentration, within a limited territory, of what was once a considerable portion of the entire British people. She has exhibited for many centuries a less numerous, and therefore less powerful, race side by side with a race far more numerous, and of men of unconquerable energy, and there has been a process which has gone on for long, or, to use a familiar expression, what I may call squeezing the Welsh into Wales; for there were times when Wales laid claim to portions of territory that are not Wales now. Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire still bear the token of that state of things, and show that Wales, which was the ancient sanctuary of Christianity in Britain at the time when it was stamped out in every county, or nearly every county, now called English in the middle and south of England, formerly used to extend considerably beyond her present borders. And what a gallant fight she made! Of those borders, among others, one tradition relates to the very parish in which I have the happiness to live, and which belongs to the borderland. We are told that there was at one time a serious political difference upon the question whether the Hawarden district was to be made Wales or to continue the borderland. The tradition is that that great man, Simon de Montfort, who, although he has been dead 600 years, is notwithstanding one of the greatest names in our history, distinctly recommended and advised that the River Dee should be taken as the border, and that the Hawarden district should be recognised as part of Wales. I am sorry to say it was by still higher political influence that that recommendation was overborne, and that that district continued to be a border district, and, being a border district, it did not come so absolutely under Welsh influence as no doubt would otherwise have been the case. But we have plenty of testimonies in Hawarden to the original "Welshness,"

if I may so speak, of the country; for our church takes its name from St Deniol, a saint wholly unknown in England; and the parish is full of names which can only be explained by reference to Welsh roots; and I have placed in the hands of Sir Edward Watkin a little book, and a very interesting book, by Mr David Lewis, a Welsh barrister, I believe, where the city of Hereford is spoken of in connection with Wales as "her great city of Hereford." All that has gone by. The Welsh made a very good and a very hard fight against the English in self-defence, and what was the consequence? That the English were obliged to surround your territory with great castles; and the effect of this has been that, as far as I can reckon, more by far than one-half of the great remains of the castles in the whole island south of the Tweed are castles that surround Wales. That shows that Wales was inhabited by men, and by men who valued and were disposed to struggle for their liberties.

I think it may entertain you if I tell you that on this occasion—in order to ascertain and get some light upon previous ideas about Wales—I thought I would resort to a source which is one on this subject of peculiar interest—namely, the books of Shakespeare—to see what Shakespeare thought about the Welsh, and, in the first place, to compare his ideas of the Welsh with his ideas of the Irish and Scotch. If you take his ideas of the Irish, they are very soon disposed of. He mentions them very seldom, and when he does mention them it is in a manner far from agreeable to the Irishman. But with regard to the Scotch, I think he was slightly more respectful. You would find it not easy to get a very good character of the Scotch out of the plays of Shakespeare. Now, whatever be the cause, it is of considerable interest, in my opinion, to look to what he has said of the Welsh, and that I can venture for the most part to quote without fear in this assembly. There is one part of it where I must tax your patience and self-denial a little; and I think I had better get rid of that first, in order, like the children, to keep the best part of the helping of pudding they have received to the last. Therefore I will refer first to the case in which Shakespeare is perhaps least flattering to Wales, and that is

the case of what was, after all, an exceedingly respectable man, namely, the clergyman, the priest, Sir Hugh Evans, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. Sir Hugh Evans comes into conflict with Falstaff, and therefore, of course, becomes the butt of Falstaff; because, just as Cromwell, for example, when he was in the field, knocked down everybody that opposed him, so Falstaff, although he was apt to run away from the field of battle, yet in the field of contest of wit he was superior to all mankind; and even Prince Henry, afterwards King Henry V., got the worst of it when he came to loggerheads with Falstaff in a tournament of wit. So it was no wonder if Falstaff took certain liberties with Sir Hugh Evans. Sir Hugh Evans was dressed up in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* as a fairy to pinch Falstaff. Being so, he was the more a fit subject for Falstaff, who called him three things. They are none of them very bad. First of all, he called him a Welsh goat: secondly, he called him a piece of toasted cheese: and, thirdly, when he professed to be very much exhausted and dejected, he complained of him and said, "I am not able to answer the Welsh flannel." I believe that is all that Shakespeare said in mischief. You have heard the worst of it, and it is not very bad. But here is a curious thing as it appears to me, and that was that there was a Welsh parson, as he is called, I think, in the play. At that time they had not taken many Welsh clergymen to Windsor, but they had imported in the last century a great many English clergymen to be bishops and priests in Wales, with what consequences to the welfare of the Church you know too well. And that is a point on which unhappily, there can be no difference of opinion. But it is a curious circumstance that Shakespeare should have produced a Welsh clergyman at Windsor; and my explanation of it is that the presence of this Welsh clergyman at Windsor, and also some good words which Shakespeare used about the Welsh, were due to the strong predilection of Queen Elizabeth for Wales. Never forget when you hear the name of Queen Elizabeth that, if she is a person with respect to whom in her character as a woman there may be many criticisms and differences of opinion, yet she is a woman to whom, in my opinion,

Englishmen owe an immeasurable debt, and whom Welshmen ought to remember with respect. You owe to her in the main the translation of the Bible, and the translation of the Bible in Wales has been what it was in England—a national institution, a prop and buttress to the language. Of that I will say a word more by and by. Moreover, I believe that, altogether, not Elizabeth only, but the prior sovereigns of the Tudor race had a friendly feeling towards Wales.

And now I am coming to loggerheads for a moment with my friend the President. But do not be afraid; there will be no inconvenient consequences. He said that Henry VIII. passed a law restricting the use of the language. Well, I am a man who likes to be cautious in his operations. I will not say whether that is so or not, but I will give you what is said by Mr Lewis in his interesting pamphlet, called "The Welshmen in English Literature." Mr Lewis says that there were fifteen penal Acts in force against Wales, Welshmen, and the Welsh tongue at the time when the Tudor family came to the throne in the person of Henry VII.; but Mr Lewis declares, and I hope the chairman will not contradict it, that these Acts were repealed upon a petition of the people of Wales in the reign of Henry VIII. Therefore, that was a time, according to that statement, very favourable to the people of Wales—that was the time when Flintshire, the county with which we are connected, first came into existence as a county—that was the time when Wales was organised in shires, when the local government of England was given to Wales: and Wales has greatly profited by that similarity of institutions. Let us see what Shakespeare says about the Welsh in other places. In the first place, he introduces Fluellyn in the play of *Henry the Fifth*, and Fluellyn proves himself to be not only a gallant soldier, but a wise captain, and Shakespeare has remarked in his favour this line, "There is much care and valour in this Welshman." Care and valour. If you can get care and valour united in a soldier, you have got the main part of a good basis upon which to build a solid character; but that is not all. I have told you how he speaks in his works with regard to other inhabitants of these

islands. He speaks of the "trusty" Welshman, he speaks of the "loving" Welshman; and the Duke of Buckingham, when in the field, is spoken of as "backed with the hardy Welshmen." Shakespeare, then, calls the Welsh trusty, loving, and hardy. What else do you desire? He could not have done it better if he had received his education in the Eisteddfod. To describe a nation as being trusty, as being affectionate, and as being brave and enduring, you have left very little indeed which I can add to the character. These, I think, were very good times, and Shakespeare was a great man, and you can have no more distinguished and illustrious title to fall back upon than by citing what he has thought and what he has said of the Welsh. I do not doubt in my own mind that some portion of the credit ought to be reflected upon Queen Elizabeth, because Shakespeare added to his other qualities that of being a good courtier and a loyal king-and-queen-worshipper; and I have no doubt he considered a little what would be acceptable in high quarters when he penned these remarkable eulogies of the Welsh people. Still I have no doubt his heart assented.

But now, ladies and gentlemen, one word more. I am not going to detain you much longer. I do not know whether many of you have read a pamphlet written by a distinguished Welshman, Mr Ivor James, of University College, Cardiff, in which he develops a most curious course of events in respect to the Welsh language. In fact he says that about 300 or 400 years ago the Welsh language was in great danger of becoming extinct. It wanted some central prop and stay. It was not found at that time in the institutions of the Church. The services of the Church were in Latin, consequently they did nothing for the Welsh language but when I speak of the services of the Church, I want to say one word under a kind of constraint of conscience, because it is an open point on which I think I differ from many worthy men. The mass of the people believe the Welsh to have been a very religious people for about 120 or 150 years, but there are a great many who are in the habit of saying that before that time the Welsh were a very godless people. This is a place, I hope, of freedom of opinion, and

will you allow me to say I do not believe a word of it? I believe that they were a religious people from the time that they have been a people, from the time when they harboured the old Christian religion in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries at the time when it was driven out of the great bulk of the English counties but I am aware that in the last 100 or 150 years they have had extraordinary calls made upon their devout zeal, and that they have met these calls in a manner and to a degree, out of means comparatively slender, which undoubtedly make that period illustrious in the religious history of the country. But I come to Mr James, who says there was no support to the Welsh tongue from the services of the Church. There were many monasteries in the country, but the monasteries were of English influence, and around them grew English-speaking populations. There were, perhaps, still more castles in the country, every one of which was held by an English garrison. Around those castles gathered villages and towns, of which we have the remains at Hawarden and in plenty of other places; but in those castles English was the language spoken, and English diffused itself from every one of those centres, and the consequence was that a tremendous pressure from a great number of centres was brought to bear by the dominant race and by the dominant tongue upon the native race of the country. Mr Rhys supports his doctrine— I am speaking from memory, and no doubt somewhat imperfectly, but I think it of great interest— by showing that for a certain time after the invention of printing the number of Welsh books printed was, exceedingly small compared with the number of English books printed for Wales. Now, in this period, as he shows, the great centres of English influence were destroyed; the monasteries were destroyed in the reign of Henry VIII., and the less we say about that the better. I think as to the manner in which that operation was performed, it was brutal, cruel, and relentless. A great number of centres of religious influence were then destroyed. Then came the destruction of castles. I believe there was not a castle in Wales that was not dismantled by or about the time of the Restoration; so all those centres of English influ-



ence were destroyed, Consequently there was more room for the Welsh language to get fair play. Then what happened? The services of the Church, formerly in a foreign tongue, came to be in Welsh, and the services of the Church in Welsh, and the translation of the Bible into Welsh, formed the mainstay and central prop for the Welsh language all through the country. This may be an historical speculation in some degree, but I have always thought it an extremely curious question deserving of all investigation.

How was it that the Welsh, who are now in the main a nation of Nonconformists, in the middle of the seventeenth century were the stoutest Churchmen in the country? There is no doubt about the fact that Wales was the stronghold of the Church and Royalist party. I believe the explanation of that is to be found in the circumstances I have mentioned—namely, that in the sixteenth century it was through the arrangements of the Church that the Welsh people got the support and stay for their language, and that from that time forward it became certain that if they were attached to it, then it would remain as long as they chose to keep it. What happened? Was it not the intrusion of English into the country, and of English into the churches, irrespective of the capacity of the people to understand it even, and the intrusion of English clergymen and English bishops not in sympathy with the people—was not that a main cause of producing estrangement which left the Welsh people in a state of religious destitution, from which they have made such wonderful, such heroic, and such effectual efforts to detach themselves?

Now, if that be so, it enables me to wind up in a moment. I have endeavoured to show you what the Welsh language required. I presume that all of you present are here for the purpose of commemorating its literature and its arts, and you wish to maintain that wide and prevailing usage of it which we find at present in almost every part of Wales. If so, see what has happened in former times: see how the language gave way 300 or 400 years ago, if Professor Rhys is right, for want of institutions to sustain it. See how, with institutions

to sustain it, the Welsh language rallied and became more than ever deeply rooted in the minds and affections of the people. Then I say, gentlemen, I have a crowning testimony in favour of this Eisteddfod, because it is here that you meet for the purpose of giving it a recognised, an impartial, a universal means of countenance and support. It is here that you rally the whole Welsh nation for the purpose, and long, I hope, gentlemen, after I have gone—I will say more, and add that long after the youngest and heartiest among us has departed to his account—may these meetings flourish, and may the attachment of the Welsh people to their institutions and their tongue always have fair play, and result in their being maintained, not only for the gratification of their tastes, but, as I believe, for the elevation of their characters, and for the promotion of the best and the highest welfare of the country. Ladies and gentlemen, I have detained you a long time, but I trust you will not feel insensible to the fact that I have looked seriously at the questions for the purpose of which this institution exists. What I have spoken to you I have spoken in conformity with all the sentiments of my heart, and with the best conclusions at which my judgment could arrive. Prosperity to Wales, and prosperity to the Eisteddfod as a great means of promoting the welfare of Wales!

# THE IRISH QUESTION

BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 7, 1888

*On the occasion of the eleventh annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Birmingham, Mr Gladstone addressed a great meeting in Bingley Hall. During his visit to Birmingham he made several other speeches.*

MR CHAIRMAN, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I fear that before this assembly, almost unparalleled except in the town of Birmingham, I must entirely fail to address myself in any competent manner to the resolution<sup>1</sup> which you have adopted, except upon the supposition that I may venture to draw to a degree altogether unusual upon your patience, your indulgence, and your self-denial, so that although we go beyond the numerical limits of all ordinary public meetings, nevertheless we may discharge the duties of intelligent citizens met here to consider Imperial matters of the highest possible importance, and to reason upon the conduct which it behoves us to pursue. Now, gentlemen, the resolution you have passed stands in broad contradiction to a statement which I have seen repeated in the journals of recent days—that the question of Home Rule is dead. If boldness of assertion can carry the day, I am by no means sure that we may not come off second best. The man who among all our opponents speaks with the greatest weight, and on many occasions with the greatest moderation: I mean Lord Hartington—has recently expressed his belief that he will hear no more of the argument for Home Rule; and he has developed in recent speeches a faculty of which, among his many great gifts, he had never previously been suspected, and that is the faculty of a most bold and vivid imagination. Now we shall see, and we shall see in part from the proceedings of this assembly, whether the question of

<sup>1</sup> Expressing approval of Mr Gladstone's Policy.

Home Rule is dead, or whether the undertaker is to be put into request for the purpose of serving the absolute necessities of a party very different from ours.

Gentlemen, what I wish to state to you is, firstly, that the Irish cannot and the Irish ought not, to acquiesce in a Government which is against them, a Government of unequal laws :— that they ought to resent, and that they must and do resent the conduct of an Administration which, while it professes to be devoted to the execution of the law, on the contrary, never fails to manifest its contempt for the law in every case where it finds the action of the law is inconvenient to its purposes and aims; and, finally, gentlemen, I hold—and I believe you will hold with me—that apart from the question of Imperial interests, the Irish themselves, the Irish people, must in the long run be the best judges in what manner and in what place it is most expedient and most hopeful to deal with the local and particular affairs of Ireland. Well, gentlemen, have I used these phrases in a spirit of levity? On the contrary, there is not a word that I have said that does not, in my opinion, admit of demonstration as conclusive as you can desire, but much more copious than I should like, or than it would be practicable for me to inflict upon you. I said, first, the Irish people did not and ought not to acquiesce in a system of unequal laws. Do they suffer under any unequal laws? Let us bring the question to an issue; and I will give you examples, which in my opinion cannot for a moment—I don't even believe will for a moment—be questioned or denied.

I take first the law of combination among the poorer classes of the community, by which they seek—in the use of a weapon that Nature has supplied to them—to redress the serious inequalities under which they stand, as compared with their wealthier neighbours, in doing justice to themselves with respect to their social and economical necessities. You have a law of combination in England which is just and equal, and which permits the working people to combine without exposing them to the charge of conspiracy; but in Ireland, on the contrary, they may not practise the very same expedient of

endeavouring to place themselves in collective action, which is prohibited under the name of inducing others to exclusive dealing. We know from very high authority—the authority of one of the most eminent judges on the Irish bench, and one of the most upright, namely, Chief Baron Palles—that such combinations for exclusive dealing, and for inducing others to enter into exclusive dealing, may expose the Irishman, although they do not expose the Englishman, to a charge of conspiracy, and to the penalties following upon the charge.

Well, I take another case still more simple ; I take the law of public meeting, one of the most vital as a condition of the preservation of our liberties. Does the Irishman, as respects the law of public meeting, enjoy equality with the native of this island ? Supposing, gentlemen, if you will allow me the supposition, improbable as it is—that is not material, it is for argument's sake—supposing you and I have in view an important object, and propose to promote it by the gathering together of a public assembly. Supposing the public authority of this country deems that assembly to be dangerous, without entering into minute definitions, either dangerous to the public peace, which, in this country, I believe, is the only ground on which any authority would venture to act against it, but supposing the public authority prohibits our assembly—that is the material point—it is our duty for the moment, I believe, to submit to the public authority, but we are at liberty to challenge it in a court of justice—we are at liberty to obtain against that public authority the sentence of a court of justice, and under the protection of a judicial power, if we can make good our case at law, we are entitled to redress, and to hold such a public meeting. Gentlemen, if a parallel case occurs in Ireland, where the people desire to resort to the use of that powerful and legitimate instrument—and God knows that in Ireland they have tenfold and fiftyfold the occasion that we have or that, I believe, we ever shall have, to employ that instrument—if in Ireland it is intended to employ it, the Lord-Lieutenant can forbid that meeting. He can forbid it under the conditions of the so-called Crimes Act, by the use of the most

general and vague terms in which he is authorised by the Coercion Act to exercise its powers. There is no power of calling him to account before a court of justice. We asked in the House of Commons that that power might be given. It was refused, and we were not able even to obtain a discussion of the question, because the system called the Closure was put into operation to prevent our arguing that the Irishmen ought, in this vital matter, to have equality of rights with the Englishmen.

I will give you another example—the law of prison discipline. In England, if a person is put in prison, and if he is convicted of the offence of sedition—a political if not a very grave offence—he is entitled (I believe I am correct in saying he is entitled) to be relieved from the ordinary indignities and hardships of prison life to which the ordinary criminal is habitually subject, and he enjoys the privileges of what are called first-class misdemeanants. In Ireland there is no such power—there is no such law, and sixteen at least of the Members of Parliament returned by Irish constituencies have been put in prison for political offences much less connected than the offence of sedition is with breach of the public tranquillity, or danger to the State; and a gross inequality prevails between the countries, justifying the assertion I made that the Irish are not, and ought not to be, contented or to acquiesce in gross inequalities of law affecting their condition. But I should understate the case in saying that the offence of sedition in Ireland would not have the same treatment as it has in England. The law of sedition is, I believe, the same in the two countries; but what I stand upon is this—that for offences much less than those of sedition in Ireland—namely, such offences as those charged against Members of Parliament,—after having been subjected to trial before the tribunal of resident magistrates,—dismissible at pleasure by the Crown, or upon being found guilty of what is deemed conduct at variance with the Coercion Act—they have been subject to indignities to which, by the general law of the land, persons guilty of sedition (a much higher and graver offence) are not subject when they suffer the punishment to which they may have been sentenced.

Well now, gentlemen, I give you another example. You will perceive that these cases all dwell and all turn upon matters in which the condition of the Irish people is vitally concerned. They all turn upon matters associated with their daily pursuits: with the means of gaining their livelihood, and with securities that they possess, or ought to possess, for gaining that livelihood in peace and in quietness. I come now to another instance, still more clear and definite and intelligible to every mind, without entering into detail. We have had two cases, one on each side of the Channel, or rather two classes of cases, in which it has been found necessary for Parliament during these later years to interfere with contracts made between landlord and tenant, and to apply to those contracts the correcting hand of a public authority for the purpose of preventing a practical operation of the power, which has amounted in many cases to the infliction of the severest and most grinding hardships. Those cases have been, the one of them, as you know very well, in Ireland, and the other among the crofters of the Highlands. In Ireland, after an obstinate and prolonged refusal, after bringing about difficulties of the gravest order in the year 1886-7 through that refusal, Parliament did at length pass an Act<sup>1</sup> enabling the Land Commission of the country to deal with the rents agreed upon, or purporting to be agreed upon, between landlord and tenant, and to give relief to the tenant where that relief should seem to be just. But in Ireland there has been a system under which the position of the tenant has been burdened and aggravated by past arrears. In cases where the tenant in Ireland has been unable to pay the rent, instead of a release or an allowance, as has been given in England, the practice largely followed has been to add the then rent to the arrears, and keep them hanging over the head of the tenant. Consequently we have contended that the power given to the Land Commission to deal with rents should also be extended to dealing with arrears; and this most just and reasonable claim in Ireland was refused. How did you proceed in Scotland? The same case had arisen in Scotland. The crofter

<sup>1</sup> The Irish Land Bill of 1887.

claimed that relief should be given to him. Relief was given him, and judges were appointed who were empowered to remit his rent. These judges were also empowered to remit or reduce his arrears. And observe the enormous importance of this distinction; for in Scotland, while the judges in the case of the Highland crofter remitted in general about 30 per cent. of the rent, they remitted more than 50 per cent., I believe nearly 60 per cent., of the arrears: while the consequence of withholding that power in Ireland has been to leave the tenant at the mercy of every landlord who was disposed to make undue use of his position, and has brought about, not in every case by a direct and avowed method of action, but has brought about, almost as a general rule, not directly, but, as I believe, by a substantial relation of cause and effect, those painful evictions which have shocked the mind of this country from one end to the other, and which make it hopeless to believe that the Irish people can ever acquiesce with satisfaction in a state of things so contrary to principles of equal dealing between the three countries.

Now, gentlemen, I will say no more upon that subject of unequal laws, except that Lord Hartington has stated that the painful character of these evictions entails a responsibility which lies at the door of the Liberal party. Now, gentlemen, the discussion of such evictions I will not enter upon. I will not make myself responsible for any broad and general statement such as goes beyond, and must go beyond, the knowledge I possess; but I say, in the first place, that these evictions are from time to time attended with circumstances of horror in Ireland that would not for a moment be endured in this country upon any plea, however important and generally substantial it might be, with reference to the rights of property, whether in land or in anything else. Take the case, for example, which happened quite recently of a man of the name of Dunne, who was suffering from a bronchial complaint, who besought, in consequence of this bronchial complaint, that he might not be turned out of his house. In defiance of the prayer, and when he was in that condition, he was turned out of doors, and I believe that within twenty-four hours, or within a very short period indeed—not



much longer—he paid the debt of nature; and on the very day when the inquest on his body commenced the evictions of his neighbours were being carried on. These things, gentlemen, could not happen among us. But apart from these cases, which I hope are incidental and occasional only, I affirm that the responsibility of such evictions lies at the doors of those who refused in 1886 to give to the Irish tenant the relief they had given to the Highland tenant, and who caused them, principally through the medium of the arrears owing to the landlord, notwithstanding the prospective relief that had been granted to them in point of rent, to remain at his mercy. Many landlords, I hope most of them, would not abuse that position, but there are undoubtedly those who do abuse it. From that abuse intense suffering arises, and that suffering pierces into the hearts of the whole Irish, ay, and in a great degree of the English people also, and leaves behind bitter recollections that can never be effaced until you determine to take effectual provision against the recurrence of such mischief.

Well now, gentlemen, I make another charge, and it is this—the Government professes to be a Government of law and order. I challenge the assertion. I admit that they have passed cruel and insidious laws, under which many are entrapped into acts which have been made offences in Ireland, though they would not be offences in England: but I affirm that no Government known to this country in the last half century has ever shown so unblushing and unscrupulous a contempt for law in every case where respect for law would have been inconvenient for the attainment of its object. Am I able, gentlemen, to support that statement? You shall judge. I wish it were in your power, and in the power of most among you, to read a little tract—and what I am now going to say does not bear so much upon the case of the Government (and on that account I am rather glad of it), it does not bear so much upon the case of the Government as it does bear upon the system of legal administration in Ireland. The tract is called *The Murder of John Kinsella*. It is described as “A chapter from the history of law and order in Ireland.” It is written by a gentleman who must be

considered as responsible—a priest, I believe, of the neighbourhood, Dr Patrick Dillon. It sums up the whole case, which we had before known only in disjointed fragments, with every evidence of indisputable truth: and I believe, gentlemen, those among you who are able to read this pamphlet will arrive at the same painful conclusion as myself.

This man was a man who was unquestionably—for it is admitted on all hands—shot down in open day without having wounded anybody, without having injured anybody—shot down in open day by a body of persons who are called Emergency men. Proceedings took place, a coroner's inquest was held, and a sort of trial. You should go through the details to see how the question was handled, how the magistrates, how the different officers concerned made their examination, or shirked making their examination, into the particulars of the case; and I do not scruple, gentlemen, as a responsible person, to say, after reading impartially that statement, you will come to the conclusion that (owing to a proven and inveterate vice in the administrative system of Ireland) the life of a Nationalist is not regarded as being upon a footing with the life of a citizen in this country—at least it is not supposed to be watched with the same vigilant jealousy, circled with the same effectual guarantees; and where it has been lost, the examination is an examination conducted in a different spirit; rather, apparently, with the desire to find the means of escape from any serious result of the loss of life that has taken place than with that other spirit, which would prevail in other places and districts of this country, with regard to every class of citizen, be it what it might—namely, the desire that full justice should be done, and that the wrong perpetrated should be brought effectually before the tribunals of the country.

But the action, gentlemen, in this case, as I have said, does not immediately concern Her Majesty's Government, inasmuch as, although I am not prepared to say that they ought not to have acted, I am not aware that they have been distinctly and positively challenged with regard to it. I must now name to you another case—a name not unfamiliar, a name which must

be repeated in this country again and again until the right is done, or until wrong is acknowledged—that is the name of Mitchelstown. Now, gentlemen, recollect what happened in the case of Mitchelstown. An assembly had gathered together for a legal purpose. That assembly was disturbed—illegally disturbed by the action of the constabulary. The constabulary, under the pretext of bringing a reporter of the proceedings, who ought to have gone by another route to the platform, that constabulary attempted to force its way right through the heart of the crowd;—and I ask you what you would say in this country if it were possible— and, thank God, it is not!—if from some portion of this hall a body of sixteen policemen should endeavour to force their way to the platform where I stand, under the pretext of bringing a reporter to note the proceedings;—aye, gentlemen, and when they failed, they again charged the people, and I speak what I know to be the mind of great lawyers when I say every man of that constabulary was guilty of a breach of the peace, and every one of them ought to have been put in prison. Don't suppose I forget that they were acting under orders. Don't suppose I mean that they were justly liable to severe punishment. I am merely speaking of the illegality of their act, which was gross and undeniable. The meeting was attacked a second time, and, being attacked a second time, it resisted the constabulary. Hereupon, although the meeting remained in the square where it was being held, the constabulary fired into the crowd from the windows of their barracks, and three Irish citizens were killed as the result of that firing.

An inquest was held, and the verdict of the inquest—whether right or wrongly, on technical grounds, I won't undertake to say—the verdict of the inquest was quashed. No other effective inquiry was made. The Government took no step whatever to ascertain the cause of the death of these three men. The moment that the report reached the House of Commons they declared the constabulary had done its duty, and nothing but its duty. They pretended that there had been an attack by the mass of the meeting upon the constabulary barracks. It was proved by the most distinct evidence that

there never were twenty or fifty people in the street where the barracks were. The attention of this country was called to the facts, although they have never been brought out with that fulness with which, if it were possible, I should wish to lay them before you. But it being found that the allegations of a crowd and a riot could not be sustained—except, indeed, the riot was made by the constabulary themselves--this being found, it was thought necessary to offer some kind of apology for the deaths of these three men, and what happened? After six or eight months had elapsed, a case was got up under the authority of an officer of the Government in Ireland in respect of one of the persons killed.

I think he was a youth named Lonergan, who stood in the square where the meeting was being held: and the case as got up was this, that it was impossible from the window of the constabulary barracks to kill Lonergan by a deliberate aim, because the corner of the buildings intervened between, and consequently Lonergan could only have been killed by a ricochet shot; that is to say, by some description or other of rebound. That was the case set up. Aye, and then came in the Irish Secretary,<sup>1</sup> bold in its adoption. Yes; but don't let me say too much against the Irish Secretary. The Irish Secretary is acting for his colleagues. His colleagues are as responsible as he is. These called Liberals—those called Liberal Unionists—who make a Tory minority into a Unionist majority, are more responsible still; and every voter in this country who, when a bye-election occurs, deliberately goes to the poll and records his vote whether for Tory or Dissident Liberal, I care not which, is just as responsible as they are. He contributes, it may be a small part, to the general result, but it is all he can contribute: and it is the mass of these particular and individual votes by which, when collected into general results, the policy of the country is determined. Therefore, when I refer to the Irish Secretary I refer to him only as the organ of those powers behind him, and it is to them that I want to direct your attention.

<sup>1</sup> Mr A. J. Balfour.

However, the Irish Secretary, I must say, appears to me to discharge his part with a spirit of glee which is more creditable to his courage than to his humanity and right feeling. He said it was now an undoubted fact that Lonergan was killed by a ricochet or rebounding shot, and his imagination added—"I have no doubt that the other two people were also killed by ricochet or rebounding shots." Gentlemen, I hold in my hand what you may see sufficiently to understand their general character; and although your eyes cannot reach the particulars, I think I can make them very easily intelligible. They are two photographs taken at Mitchelstown upon the spot. You will observe the point at issue was that it was impossible physically, from the police barrack, to have killed Lonergan in the square where the meeting was held—that is the point at issue—because there was a mass of buildings between, which absolutely prevented it. Now here are two photographs, and a photograph cannot lie. One of them is a photograph of the spot where the young man Lonergan died, and died, I am bound to say, a martyr to his country, and that photograph is taken from where? From the window of the police barracks. Did the photograph go round the corner? In just the same way the second photograph is a photograph of the police barracks. It is taken from the very spot where Lonergan fell—a spot which has been marked and commemorated by some kind of memorial that the affection of his countrymen has supplied, that it might be consecrated in their hearts for ever. The second photograph from the spot where Lonergan fell, shows the police barracks in perfect plainness, and thus is exploded the whole of this miserable fiction, devised six or eight months after the fact, and when no inquiry into those deaths had taken place. It has melted into thin air, and will be remembered as one of the most worthless figments that ever was devised to cover the iniquity of an administrative system, and the shameless boldness of a *Government which upheld that lawless conduct while professing to be the champion of order and of lawful rule.*

There is a great deal more, gentlemen, even in the Mitchelstown case, that you ought to know, but I won't detain you

longer on that subject. One single instance of distinct countenance given to lawlessness on the part of a Government, given deliberately and after warning, ought to suffice; but I am sorry to say there is no difficulty in multiplying the instances, although the circumstances of time and place under which I speak will not allow me to dwell upon them even at the length at which I have troubled you about Mitchelstown. In the case, gentlemen, of four or five convictions to certain terms of imprisonment at a place called Killeagh, what happened was this—that the magistrates took evidence upon an offence which they had no power whatever by law to try; and, having taken that evidence, they sentenced four or five men to imprisonment for an offence which they *had* power to try by law—that is, by the Coercion Act—but upon which they had not taken a single syllable of evidence; and I am now speaking to you, not in my own language, but in the language of the judges of the Superior Court before which the case was brought in Ireland. How was the case brought before the Superior Court? It never was the intention of Her Majesty's Government that it should go to the Superior Court at all. They wanted it settled by the resident magistrates and County Court judge if there was any appeal at all. In some cases there is an appeal, and in some there is not; but the ingenuity of Mr Healy found that the principles of the Constitution were not so entirely dead even in Ireland but that he could claim an appeal. He brought this scandalous and shameful case of the resident magistrates of Killeagh before the Superior Court; and Chief Baron Palles and Mr Baron Dowse denounced the conduct of those magistrates, stating against them the very proposition which I have endeavoured to lay before you. And, gentlemen, these two resident magistrates—though there is not the smallest doubt that they were warned three times over, by the solicitor for the parties accused, of what they were about to do—deliberately refused to allow the case to be brought before a superior authority; and though they did, as I have said, take evidence on a case they had no power to try, and sentenced the men in a case on which they had not taken a word of evidence, these two men, whom I

do not wish to consign to infamy by quoting their names, are still resident magistrates, empowered to do what is called justice to the people of Ireland: and it is under these circumstances we are told by Lord Hartington that this Government is most cruelly used by the Liberal party, because the whole sum and substance of its offence, after all, only consists in this—that their resolution and courage are spent in an endeavour to establish in Ireland the principles of law and order. The truth is, gentlemen, that it is endeavouring to make the principles of law and order—which are sacred principles, and which involve the vitality of every well-ordered community—it is endeavouring to make these principles odious in the sight of every rational man who has the smallest spark in him of the love of freedom, of constitutional freedom, by which this country is become great, and without which it never could have attained to its position among nations.

I will only mention one other case, and very briefly indeed, to make good my proposition that this Government is a lawless Government— a Government that tramples upon law, and that insults the law whensoever the law is found inconvenient for the purpose it has in view. And this is a very simple case indeed, and a very simple issue. You have heard much of Mr Mandeville. You know that Mr Mandeville died. You know that a coroner's inquest was held upon Mr Mandeville. That coroner's inquest was a legal court, that verdict<sup>1</sup> was that of a legal tribunal. We know much of the particulars, and this evening I am not going to enter upon any of them; but when the verdict was reported in the House of Commons, in a moment the Irish Secretary, the champion of law and order, declared that this verdict of a legal court, arrived at with perfect regularity of proceeding, ought to be treated with contempt. Now I will leave that subject. I have done with it, and I think I have said enough to justify what I mean. I won't enter into the question, gentlemen, by a lengthened argument whether the Irish people are the best judges of the manner in which

<sup>1</sup> It was to the effect that death was "brought about by the brutal and unjustifiable treatment he received in Tullamore gaol."

their own local affairs ought to be managed and controlled, though I may incidentally have to touch it before I release you from the burdensome task of listening—a task to which I must say you are addressing yourselves with a patience which is beyond all praise.

Now, gentlemen, I come to a question that is a very grave one indeed for us inside Parliament—more grave than you can easily conceive—and that is the state of the account between what are sometimes called the two wings of the Liberal party. It is said that there are two wings. (A Voice: “One has got no feathers to it.”) It probably would be better if that one wing had some feathers on it, because then there might be a chance of its flying away. I am afraid that as matters now stand there is no likelihood of its flying away by voluntary action, although I have no doubt that, feathers or no feathers, like the albatross, which, I believe, is not at all strong in that particular, when the proper time comes you will teach that wing to fly away. But, gentlemen, this is one of the wings of the Liberal party; and though what I now see before me is numerically but a mere sample of our wing—I verily believe that if the whole of the other wing were collected from one end of the country to the other, they would find it very difficult to fill up Bingley Hall.

But, gentlemen, it is not the question of strength that I want to discuss. It is the question of right. If you will allow me, for really I have acquired such unbounded faith in your patience that I shall perhaps be unscrupulous in drawing upon it, you will see the importance of the matter. The allegation has been made all along that the Dissident Liberals are doing no more than consistently adhering to the acknowledged and universally practised principles of the Liberal party; that we have departed from those principles, and thereby have brought about the lamentable schism which exists. That, gentlemen, is the question I want you to try; and my allegations about the Dissident Liberals are these, and I will try to make them good, as I hope I have made good in some degree my allegations about the laws and the Government. My allegations



as to the Dissident Liberals are these three—first of all I say they have not maintained the true traditions of the Liberal party in respect to Ireland, but have abandoned them; they have not maintained, secondly, the pledges they gave at the Election, but have broken them; and, in the third place, I will show you that they have resorted to the very worst practices of the old Irish ascendancy, in endeavouring to set the different fractions of the Irish people one against the other, because they know that to a united Ireland they could not possibly refuse the reasonable request that is made by the people of that country.

Now, gentlemen, patiently listen to me for a few minutes while I try that question. Who are, on this great occasion, true representatives of the traditions of the Liberal party of England? And who are the untrue, I won't say false, but the untrue pretenders to that representation? I must now carry you back for a moment to the period of the Union—I must recall to your recollection that the Union between England and Ireland was warmly, vigorously, and I think I may say unanimously, condemned by nearly the entire Liberal party, opposed by Mr Fox, Mr Sheridan, Mr Grattan, Lord Fitzwilliam, and another name that you will recognise with honour here—by Lord Spencer—the Lord Spencer of that day.<sup>1</sup> The Union was resolutely carried by means which I will not now stop to describe, but which I think were the foulest and the wickedest that ever were put in action, as far as I know—certainly they were unsurpassed in foulness and in wickedness in all the records of the crimes of Governments. By those means the Union was passed. And what was the Union? The Union, gentlemen, was a great revolution in the relations between England and Ireland. That great Irishman, Mr Burke, who unhappily was taken from among mankind before the Union was carried, was always an opponent of the plan and principle of the Union. He said Ireland had had its last revolution in 1782, a beneficial and a happy revolution; and he hoped it would never have another. But that other revolution came.

<sup>1</sup> This is an error. I carelessly forgot that Lord Spencer remained a colleague of Mr Pitt. I still more carelessly forgot to mention Mr (afterwards Lord) Grey, who vigorously opposed the Union.—[*Note by Mr Gladstone.*]

What was the duty after that revolution had been accomplished, what was the duty of the Liberals who had condemned it? What did Mr Fox do? He said that much as he detested the Union, as it had been made it was his duty to give it a full and fair trial. You cannot undo a revolution the day after it has been effected; you are compelled to condescend to the essential conditions of public affairs. Mr Fox recognised that necessity—he accepted that revolution while he abhorred it. Mr Grattan followed him in accepting that revolution; and perhaps it may be a strange and startling statement, but it is an undoubted fact, that Mr Grattan was found in the English Parliament—he, the champion of Irish liberty—found in the English Parliament, after the Union had been accomplished, voting for measures of Coercion. I blame him not, gentlemen. I know too much of the hard and rigid grip of political necessities. These were necessities of the highest order. They were a necessity of the public peace of the country. The Union entailed Coercion. The Union entailed Coercion against the Irish people, as it entailed neglect of Irish interests, as it entailed the destruction of almost all care for Ireland on the part of nearly the whole upper class of the Irish community. That was the conduct pursued by Mr Fox and Mr Grattan; that was the conduct pursued by Lord Grey, Lord Althorp, and by Lord Russell. Lord Althorp stated, I believe, that if the majority of the Irish representatives ever came and demanded seriously an alteration of the relations established by the Union, that concession, that change must take place; but what I wish to impress upon you is this, gentlemen, that although the Liberal party was by principle and conviction opposed to the Union, it was their duty when the Union had been passed to give it the fullest trial, even among the many painful circumstances with which its working was accompanied.

Is that trial to go on for ever? Are all the generations of mankind to be the servants and the slaves of that particular generation, which, under the guidance of Mr Pitt and Lord Castle-reagh, partly cheated and partly tyrannised the Irish nation into the Union? No! I affirm that when sufficient experience

has been accumulated, it is the duty of the Liberal party again to consider what is the condition of Ireland, what is the power of establishing in Ireland that first condition of all good government, the tolerable satisfaction and contentment of the people.

We have been, gentlemen, coercing Ireland ever since the Union; we have coerced it of late more than ever we coerced it before. At last we have ended it by making Coercion for the first time the principle of the permanent law of Ireland. It was formerly an expedient; it has now become a policy—it has now become a practice, it has now become an idol; and those who call themselves Liberal Unionists go forth over the country glorying in the nature of the enactments which they undoubtedly have brought about. Well, gentlemen, there are two things to be looked at—one is the working of the Union in itself, and the other is the voice of the Irish people with regard to it. I cannot defend its working; I cannot defend a system of government by perpetual Coercion employed, not against the malefactors of a nation by the body of a nation, but employed against one nation which inhabits Ireland by the other nation or nations which inhabit Great Britain. But what is the meaning of constitutional representation, what is the voice of Ireland upon this subject? Eighty-six Members from Ireland out of 103, or rather out of 101, because to call the two representatives of Dublin University representatives of Ireland is a mere—an absolute mockery. These eighty-six Members, elected as constitutionally as the Members for London or for Birmingham, elected as peacefully, and elected by a far more decisive balance of votes and opinions, they demand of us this change which we believe is totally free from all danger to the fabric of the Empire. At the same time we are compelled to confess the total failure of our attempt to govern Ireland under the present system. Now, observe this, that there were some few of the Liberals who had joined in opposing the Union, and who, after the Union, found fault with Fox, Grattan, Lord Grey, Lord Althorp, and Lord Russell, and the bulk of the Liberal party because they gave it a fair trial. They would have had exactly the same, or probably better, cause for arguing the inconsistency of the

Liberal party of that day than the Dissident Liberals now have against us. There would have been an apparent inconsistency—that inconsistency would have been due to a better principle of consistency and to sound and healthful dictates of political wisdom. And so, gentlemen, we ourselves, representatives, in the close of the nineteenth century, of the party whose original principle was opposition to forced union between the two countries, we, the present representatives of the party, admit the failure of these forced methods, recognising the justice of the cause of Ireland in a constitutional mode, and utterly disbelieving that there is danger to the Empire in measures which will really unite the hearts of the whole people throughout the United Kingdom. We say that we are the consistent representatives of the Liberal party of one hundred years ago, and that it is the Dissident Liberals, and not we, who have broken with this historical tradition.

Well, but these Dissident Liberals have done more than that, gentlemen. They have broken not only those sound historical traditions, but, beyond all question and all doubt, they have broken their party pledges. They have made a Coercion far more formidable in principle and character than any that ever was known before. But I will not trouble you by entering into its particulars. They promise that Ireland should have Local Government at least as large as England. Now, that is a statement so serious that I think I ought to support it by reading you a few words from the declaration of Lord Hartington. Lord Hartington, at Rossendale, on July 7th, 1886, said—"Whatever rights we give to England and Scotland"—he was speaking of Local Government—"whatever right we give to England and Scotland, we are ready to give equally—if a case can be made out for it, in a greater and larger and more generous degree—to Ireland." That was the solemn pledge of the election. How has that pledge been fulfilled? I will tell you, gentlemen, how it has been fulfilled. Lord Hartington has himself stated that no Local Government at all shall be given to Ireland until the people of Ireland abandon the tradition of their forefathers, and consent to put

aside entirely those views which they now in enormous proportion maintain. That I call a gross breach of pledge on the part of Lord Hartington. I need not go through that of his friends. But what have said his friends on the Treasury Bench? What says Mr Smith?<sup>1</sup> Well, Mr Smith says that until the Irish people become altogether loyal there can be no Local Government for Ireland. Pray observe—not Home Rule, but Local Government, which you were all assured at the time of the election that the Tories and the Dissentients were even more anxious to give than we. This Local Government, says Mr Smith, shall not be given until the Irish have adopted the character of loyalty, and he means by that definition—there is no doubt whatever about it—the abandonment of all ideas of Home Rule. What says Mr Balfour, who is perhaps a more influential member of the Government than Mr Smith? Mr Balfour has made an argument to this effect in my hearing—that Local Government is an extremely good thing for a people in a healthy condition; but that the Irish people are a people in an unhealthy condition, and, therefore, Local Government would be for them not a good thing, but a bad thing, and to give them Local Government would, on his part, be an offence, of which he would not be guilty. Then, I think, I have proved to you that the Dissident Liberals have broken, both by their own mouth and by the mouth of the Tories who accept their support—have broken their engagement not only with respect to Coercion, which I have heretofore shown, but also their engagements with respect to the grant of Local Government to Ireland.

There was another subject, still more prominent, at the time of the General Election, and that was the subject of the Imperial guarantee of a fund for the purchase of Irish estates. You will remember what capital was made of that subject. You know how dreadful it was represented to be that in any shape or form the English Exchequer should be liable for any payments, or should pledge its credit to assure payment, on that matter, of a farthing out of the taxes of this country. What is the case now? Do the Liberal Unionists—and they were the people who turned

<sup>1</sup> The First Lord of the Treasury.

to most account the question of Imperial guarantee—do they still hold that language? You all of you know something of the *Birmingham Post*, and I have a short passage from the *Birmingham Post* upon this subject—a passage which is anonymous, but the most important declarations of the Dissident Liberals are often supposed to issue to the world anonymously through the *Birmingham Post*. Now, what is said of the Imperial guarantee in this short passage? This is said: “If, yielding to pressure from landowners and Nationalists, the Government decide upon asking Parliament to expend further grants under Lord Ashbourne’s Act,<sup>1</sup> the Unionist majority would probably support Ministers in their proposal rather than see their position endangered. But such support would be given with reluctance and with grave apprehension, and there would be little security for the ultimate repayment of the advances of the purchases so carried.” So, then, we understand that, while not expecting repayment, they would therefore vote for this Imperial expenditure, in order to secure the political administration of their old political enemies, while they refused all political guarantee in order to overturn the position and the administration of their old political friends. That is a small matter, gentlemen. They would do it with reluctance! I must say that is no consolation to me at all. I do not know how many things they may have done with reluctance. What I know is that they have done them, and that after having done one they did not seem at all less disposed to do another, and that this chain goes on lengthening itself *ad infinitum*.

The Imperial guarantee to which they objected, and upon which the people in this country will, of course, pronounce their ultimate judgment, the Imperial guarantee was a guarantee under which England never could have lost one shilling without the absolute bankruptcy of Ireland. Before a sixpence could have been applied by the Government of Ireland to any of its purposes under the Bills of 1886, the last farthing of every English claim was made certain to be discharged as a prior encumbrance. What is the case now under Lord Ashbourne’s

<sup>1</sup> The Land Purchase (Ireland) Bill of 1885.

Act? That the British Exchequer is to be a creditor, a direct, uncovered creditor—there is no intermediate party—the direct, uncovered creditor of an indefinite number of men paying £4, £5, £10, £20, a-year in Ireland, and has to take its chance of the recovery of those sums; and advances of that kind, or rather payments of that kind, are what the Dissident Liberals are prepared to support with reluctance. I think that I have tolerably well shown that this pledge has also been cruelly broken, and I won't dwell for a moment upon the further pledge they made that Ireland should, when governed from London, have the fullest benefit of equal laws, because I have shown to you in three or four great and important cases that the laws between Great Britain and Ireland are of gross inequality.

Well, that is not all that I have to say with regard to the Dissident Liberals—for I made another charge—on which I must offer you a few words. It was to this effect, that they had reverted to the practice of endeavouring to divide the people of Ireland, to set the people of Ireland by the ears among themselves, in order that Ireland might not present to this country the aspect of a unity, but that they might be able to plead that it was a severed, and a divided and distracted country, and therein to find an excuse for refusing the reasonable demand of the vast majority of the Irish people. Now, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, this is no new device. You will find some account of it, if you choose to consult the valuable volume which is just issued from the press under the editorship of Mr Bryce, and which is called *Two Centuries of Irish History*: and I wish to show you in a few words that this setting up of one part of Ireland against another, this introduction of the element of religious bigotry among the people who were, as to the vast majority of them, untainted with that bigotry, is an old scheme and device of the English wire-puller, and has been all along an essential element in the system of oppressing and misgoverning Ireland. In the time of Lord Strafford, 250 years ago, he commended “emulation fomented underhand,” between Protestants and Roman Catholics. In those days it was attempted to stir up those religious animosities. Next to Lord

Strafford I take another name, perhaps not very well known in this country, but it is well remembered in Ireland—I mean Primate Boulter, Archbishop of Armagh. In these days a change has taken place that is considerable, but at that period of time practically the government of Ireland reposed, not in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant, who was generally absent, but in the hands of the Protestant Primates of the country. Primate Boulter said that with regard to a certain affair it would be of a very serious character, because it united the Protestants and the Papists; and if such a reconciliation took place farewell to English influence in Ireland. What I am signifying to you in very few words is the revelation of a great and guilty plan or policy, and I shall have to show you that that plan or policy is still being pursued, no doubt with more sugared language, with more intricate and perhaps mitigated methods, but with the same end in view—namely, preventing the union of Ireland, and so defeating her just hopes. When Lord Westmoreland was Viceroy, towards the end of the last century, he said that the practicability of effecting a legislative union between England and Ireland must depend upon maintaining disunion in Ireland, and disunion in Ireland has been the inhuman aim with which this policy has been worked.

Now you have heard, gentlemen, much of Belfast, and you know (not as to the whole of Belfast, but as to the larger part of it), you know that it is the great home of Orange inspiration and of the religious factions which it is still attempted to keep alive in Ireland. Very different was the Protestant Belfast of the close of the last century. There was an occasion when Belfast was visited by the deputies whom the Roman Catholics had collectively appointed to maintain and plead their interests. They visited Belfast. I should not like to say how such persons would be received now in Belfast, but this is what happened. The Protestant populace took their horses from their carriages and drew them through the town amidst intense enthusiasm. The Protestants of Ireland ninety years ago absolutely united with the Roman Catholics in claiming equality of treatment for Ireland; but the torch of religious bigotry was thrown by the



British Government among them, and the Orange Lodges were instituted in the year 1795 for the purpose of calling in aid the bad and evil principle, for the purpose of dividing Ireland and dislocating her forces, and of enabling the foes of her just rights to withhold from her concessions that they otherwise must have given. Allow me in a very few words to give you the most conclusive proof—not in my own language, which hitherto I have been more or less using—but in their own language, the conclusive proof of the justice of what I have said. My affirmation is this—that in the close of the last century the Protestants of Ireland joined hands with the Roman Catholics of Ireland, made common cause in the demand for justice to their common country, and it was the action of the Ascendency party—a party entirely confined to the wirepullers of the Administration, and unhappily with Mr Pitt and the Government at their back, which, mainly through the medium of the Orange Lodges, introduced among them what they detested, religious animosity, thereby divided them, set one against the other, and made the policy of a cruel intolerance possible between the two countries.

Now, I am going to read you a few words finally from the petition which was presented to the Crown in the year 1797. It was a petition solemnly adopted at a county meeting—I will tell you where afterwards. Its first object was to pray that the Crown would dismiss the Ministers, and the reasons given were these: In the first place, that they had landed the country in a sanguinary and destructive war, without just cause, and without skilful conduct; secondly, that they had established in Ireland a system of lawless and bloody cruelty; and thirdly, that they had endeavoured to introduce into it the demon of religious discord. And here I quote the words—“They have laboured with the most remorseless perseverance”—(“they” means the Government—the Ministry)—“they have laboured with the most remorseless perseverance to revive those senseless and barbarous religious antipathies so fatal to morals and to peace, and so abhorrent to the kind and merciful spirit of the Gospel.” And where do you think, gentlemen, that petition was framed

and adopted? It was the petition of a county meeting regularly gathered under the Sheriff in the terms I will now read to you—"The humble petition of the freeholders of the county of Antrim."—a county of which Belfast is the glory—freeholders who expressed what were then their sentiments, and the sentiments of Belfast, which the enemies of Ireland saw that it was necessary to pervert, and which they did pervert through the abominable plan that they brought into action of setting men of different persuasions by the ears. It was entitled, "The humble petition of the freeholders of County Antrim, convened by public notice from the High Sheriff at Balmeney, on Monday, May 8th, 1797, Mr Chichester, High Sheriff, in the chair."

Such was the policy of the day. Is that of the present day very different? What is the meaning of the visits of Lord Hartington to Belfast? Does he go to recommend religious concord. Does he go there to recommend that Irishmen should love Irishmen, or does he go there to inflame the Protestants in the North into idle and ludicrous apprehension, because they are less numerous than the Roman Catholics? He says—Do not abandon the vantage ground you have now got; do not allow Irishmen to govern affairs in Ireland, and from Ireland: but maintain a system odious to the vast majority of your fellow-countrymen. I will not quote his words to that effect. I will only quote one single phrase that he used. He calls passing a measure of Home Rule for Ireland "this abandoning the rest of their countrymen to their fate." To allow a country to govern itself is to abandon it or some portion of it to its fate. I have got, gentleman, a specimen of these opinions, which I think may a little entertain you. When at the end of such a speech as this it may be agreeable to you that there should be a small change in the parts. You know the great Orange journal called the *Daily Telegraph*. I quote from the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, and therefore I have no doubt I must be quite safe in quoting it, a document which is to be presented on the 14th of this month to Lord Hartington and Lord Salisbury—a most touching and most fraternal com-

bination—by the Nonconforming ministers of Ireland. Now listen to what they say.

These Nonconforming ministers of Ireland appear to have had a twinge—an internal twinge—perhaps not of conscience so much as of logical understanding—in feeling that they were liable to this reproach, that the great bulk of their brethren the Nonconforming ministers of England and of Scotland, and the Nonconforming laity of these countries, take a view very little likely to be acceptable to Lord Hartington and Lord Salisbury, and forming very bad subject matter indeed for a complimentary address to these noblemen. So with great ingenuity they have parried the blow which they expected to be dealt at them in consequence of their disagreeing with the majority of their own body; and the plea they make is this—“We hold that the opinion of our brethren”—that is, the brethren of the Nonconformists living in Ireland—“is entitled to far more weight than the expression of opinion from men who, however good their intentions, have little or no personal knowledge of the state of things in Ireland.” You observe in what way these gentlemen, these very original men—many of them of Scotch extraction—possibly on that account having considerable logical affinities and capabilities, answer the argument which they fear may be drawn from the fact that the majority of Nonconformists are against them.

What is their answer? Their answer is—the true test is in local knowledge. You English Nonconformists are not to be considered as competent judges. Local knowledge of Ireland is the true test, the true determining element, which gives weight to the judgment of a man in respect of the question of Home Rule. That is their argument. You perceive it from the sentiments I have read. Did it never occur to these wise and overwise Nonconformists, that if local knowledge of Ireland, local experience in Ireland, was a test of capacity to judge on the question of Home Rule, they, a handful of men in the North, were put already out of court, because the vast majority of Irishmen, who have certainly as much local knowledge and as much personal experience about Ireland as those Nonconformist

ministers, are convinced, determined, hereditary friends of Home Rule? That is not quite all, gentlemen. They go on and say, they appeal to Lord Salisbury and Lord Hartington for protection against the executive power, and they end with this touching paragraph—"Especially do we claim the aid," of whom?—not of our fellow-citizens upon political grounds, upon grounds of civil justice. They do not appeal to those bonds that unite men in civil communities; what they say is, "we especially claim the aid of our co-religionists." That is to say that, according to these Irish Nonconforming ministers, all our questions of politics are to be determined according as we array ourselves in this or that religious denomination.

I say, gentlemen, this is going back to the policy of the darkest times, without any of the apologies or any of the pleas which those former times might well have urged for themselves. I am not sure I have given you the most select and pleasing parts of this address, but they finally declare that if Home Rule is established in Dublin, if there is placed there a legislative body which would pass Bills—subject, remember, in every case to the veto of the British Crown, liable to be influenced on any occasion by the intervention of the British Parliament, that is to say by the action of the British majority—they say that in any such case as that, what they contemplate and expect is, that Home Rule would "deprive us of our rights of citizenship in this great Empire." Formerly gentlemen, the clergy had a monopoly of learning and intelligence. I hope that we are not to judge of the sense of the laity of the Nonconformist churches in Ireland entirely from the specimen I read to you from their ministers. Well, then, gentlemen, I think it is true that in fomenting those differences, in teaching Ireland not to agree but to differ, our friends, for they still are our friends, except in political distinction, our friends are committing a grievous error, and are going back to the worst practices of the old Protestant ascendancy. They may deem that they have got hold of an original idea. It is not original at all. It was the idea of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. It was the idea which the Protestants themselves, when they were trained to a discipline

of freedom through the action of their Parliament in the last century, learned to despise and to renounce, but which was revived among them by the influence of Orangeism, and which now, alas ! political chieftains—some political chieftains in England bearing the name of Liberal and of Whig—are endeavouring again to bring into action, to the detriment, if not to the ruin, of Ireland and of the Empire.

Well, how, gentlemen is all this to end ? What have our friends the Dissident Liberals to propose to us ? For themselves, we know they have nothing to contemplate but speedy extinction. As I have said to another Birmingham meeting and I believe it to be a very pregnant truth, they have one very strong argument indeed in their favour, and that argument is the Septennial Act. It is hardly possible to act upon them effectually by means of bye-elections, or by means of expression of public opinion, so long as they have a well-disciplined body of votes in the House of Commons, given by men who are sent to that House, and who sit in that House, by virtue and by reason of pledges, every one of which they have trampled under foot. Observe, I do not mean every man of the majority, but I mean those who make it a majority, those who constitute the Dissident Liberal Party, and who make it a majority. They have got there by pledges, which they have trampled under foot. Well, what they offer to you is that you are to persist in this painful and grievous contest. Can they reasonably expect that the Irish people will change their minds ? Why have the Irish people held out for 700 years if they are to give in now ? Why did they hold out when they were totally without the means of action ? And then it is supposed that they are to give in when they are abundantly supplied with the means of action—I mean that they are supplied with constitutional privileges, they are supplied with a broad and generous franchise and a vote which their superiors cannot pry into. They have a more extended franchise, gentlemen, than you have. It is the desire of England, as we know by a cheer that made the walls of this building ring, to adopt the principle of one man one vote, but if you look to the returns you will find that in

Ireland substantially they have got the principle already. They are armed with the whole powerful machinery of a constitutional system. Above all, they are sustained by a great party in England. Yet our opponents are desirous to go on fighting this hopeless battle. And for what? Not for honour, but for dishonour—dishonour, inasmuch as most of us believe that the world looks upon the treatment of Ireland by England as dishonourable to England.

But all must admit, from whatever point of view they approach the question, that the government of Ireland by England has been a perfect failure. They take refuge—men essentially moderate take refuge—in language of extreme violence; that surely is a good sign when we find Lord Hartington resorting to language of outrageous violence. You will judge whether these words are too strong when I read the words—I think that they form a very healthy sign of the state of the case. Lord Hartington said at Belfast on the 19th of October that the present struggle began as a struggle between union and separation. That was bad enough; but according to him it has got gradually worse since, and it is now—these are his own words—“a struggle of honesty against dishonesty, of order against disorder, of truth against falsehood, and of loyalty against treason.” And in the same speech Lord Hartington said that the party with which we are connected is nearly one-half of the voting power of the country; so that according to him nearly one-half of his countrymen support dishonesty against honesty; disorder against order; falsehood against truth, and treason against loyalty. Now, gentlemen, I say it is an extreme sign when a man essentially moderate resorts to language which I am compelled to describe—if I describe it at all—as very strong language indeed.

You are invited to maintain this system, and why? Is it economical? The waste of Imperial treasure under this system is enormous. I ought to know something of the finances of the country, and I do not hesitate to say that to estimate at from three to four millions a year of hard money the waste of the present system of governing Ireland, is but a moderate estimate of the

facts. All this waste, and to produce what? Not to produce content, but to produce discontent. Does it produce Imperial strength? Suppose we were involved in great difficulties; suppose we had—and God forbid we should have!—a crisis like that of the American War—the original American War—brought upon us at this time, would Ireland add to our strength what it ought to add? No. We have now got Ireland making a thoroughly constitutional demand—demanding what is, in her own language, a subordinate Parliament, acknowledging in the fullest terms the supremacy of the Parliament of Westminster. How can you know that under all circumstances that moderation of demand will continue? I cannot understand what principle of justice, and still less, if possible, what principle of prudence it is that induces many—I am glad to say, in my belief, the minority of the people of this country, but still a large minority—to persist in a policy of which the fruits have been unmitigated bitterness, mischief, disparagement, and dishonour.

Ah! gentlemen, with what weapons is Ireland fighting this battle? She is not fighting it with the weapons of menace, with a threat of separation, with Fenian outbreaks, with the extension of secret societies. Happily those ideas have passed away into a distance undefined. She is fighting the contest with the weapons of confidence and of affection—of confidence in the powerful party by whose irrevocable decision she knows she is supported, and of affection towards the people of England. May I tell you an incident that will not occupy two minutes in proof of what I say. In the county, I think, of Limerick, not very many days ago, an Englishman was addressing a crowd of Irish Nationalists on the subject of Home Rule. His carriage or his train, whichever it was, was just going to depart. Some one cried out, “God save Ireland,” and there was a loud burst of cheering. The train started, the cheering subsided. Another voice from the crowd was raised, and shouted, “And God save England”—and there were cheers louder still—cheers louder still, such as in the language of Shakespeare, that,

“Make the welkin ring again,  
And fetch shrill echoes from the hollow earth.”

These cheers were the genuine expression of the sentiment of the country. They, our opponents, teach you to rely on the use of this deserted and enfeebled and superannuated weapon of Coercion. We teach you to rely upon Irish affection and goodwill. We teach you not to speculate on the formation of that sentiment. We show you that it is formed already—it is in full force; it is ready to burst forth from every Irish heart, and through every Irish voice. We only beseech you, by resolute persistence in that policy you have adopted, to foster, to cherish, to consolidate that sentiment, and so to act that in space it shall spread from the North of Ireland to the South, and from the West of Ireland to the East, and in time it shall extend and endure from this present date until the last of the years and the last of the centuries that may still be reserved in the counsels of Providence to work out the destinies of mankind.



# THE DEATH OF MR JOHN BRIGHT

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 29, 1889

Mr John Bright died on March 27. He had been a member of Mr Gladstone's Cabinets in 1868 and 1880, but had declared against his Irish policy in 1886.

I TRUST I may receive the permission of the House to add a few words to what has been said so well and with such deep sincerity by the right hon. gentleman<sup>1</sup> on an occasion of peculiar interest. And I cannot help saying, at the outset of the few remarks which I may be led to make, that I think Mr Bright has been, in a very remarkable degree, happy in the season of his removal from among us. *Felix opportunitate mortis!* He has lived to witness the triumph of almost every great cause—perhaps I might say of every great cause—to which he had especially devoted his heart and mind. He has also lived to establish a special claim to the admiration of those with whom he differed through a long political life by his marked concurrence with them on the prominent and dominant question of the hour. And while he has in that way additionally opened the minds and the hearts of those who had been his opponents to an appreciation of his merits, I believe, and I think I may venture to say, he lost nothing, by that want of concord on a particular subject which we so much lamented—he lost nothing, in any portion of the party with which he had been so long associated, of the admiration and the gratitude to which they felt him to be so well entitled. I do not remember that on any occasion, from the lips of any single individual since Mr Bright came to be separated from the great bulk of the Liberal party on the Irish question, there has proceeded any word—I

<sup>1</sup> Mr W. H. Smith.

do not say of question as to his motives, for that would have been even in a high degree ridiculous—but a single word of disparagement as to the course he pursued.

I may make this acknowledgment that I have not through my whole political life fully embraced what I take to be the character of Mr Bright, and the value of that character to the country. I mention this because it was at a peculiar epoch—the epoch of the Crimean War—that I came more fully to understand than I had done before the position which was held by him and by his eminent, and I must go a step further and say his illustrious, friend Mr Cobden, in the country. These men had lived upon the confidence, the approval, and the applause of the people. The work of their lives had been to propel the tide of public sentiment. Suddenly there came a great occasion on which they differed from the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen. I myself was one of those who did not agree with them in the particular view which they took of the Crimean conflict. But I felt profoundly what must have been the moral elevation of the men who, having been nurtured through their lives in the atmosphere of popular approval and enthusiasm, could at a moment's notice consent to part with the whole of that favour which they had hitherto enjoyed, and which their opponents thought to be the very breath of their nostrils. They accepted, undoubtedly, the unpopularity of opposing that war, which, although many may have since changed their opinion with regard to it, commanded, if not the unanimous, yet the enormously prevailing approval and concurrence of the country. At that time it was—although we had known much of Mr Bright before—that we learnt something more. We had known the great mental gifts which distinguished him; we had known his courage and his consistency; we had known his splendid eloquence, which then was or afterwards came to be acknowledged as the loftiest that has sounded within these walls during his generation. But we had not till then known how high the moral tone of those popular leaders had been pitched, what bright examples they set to the whole of their contemporaries and to coming generations, and with what readiness they could part

with popular sympathy and support for the sake of the right and of their conscientious convictions.

I will not now refer to the remarkable and also highly varied gifts of Mr Bright except as to one minor particular; but I cannot help allowing myself the gratification of recording that Mr Bright was, and that he knew himself to be, and he delighted to be, one of the chief guardians among us of the purity of the English tongue. He knew how the character of the nation was associated with its language: and as he was in everything an Englishman profoundly attached to the country in which he was born, so the tongue of his people was to him almost an object of worship: and in the long course of his speeches it would be difficult, indeed hardly possible, to find a single case in which that noble language, the language of Shakespeare and of Milton, did not receive an illustration from his Parliamentary eloquence.

There is another circumstance in the career of Mr Bright that is better known to me, perhaps, than to any other person, and which I must give myself the pleasure of mentioning. Every one is aware that for him office had no attraction. But perhaps hardly any of those who hear me can be aware of the extraordinary efforts which were required to induce Mr Bright, under any circumstances, to become a minister, that is to say, a servant of the Crown. It was in the crisis of 1868 with regard to the Irish question, and when especially the fate of the Irish Church hung in the balance, that it was my duty to propose to Mr Bright that he should become a Cabinet Minister. I do not know, sir, that I ever undertook so difficult a task; but this I do know, that from eleven o'clock at night until one o'clock in the morning we steadily debated that subject. It was only at the last moment that it was possible for him to set aside the repugnance he had felt to doing anything which might, in the eyes of any one, even of the more ignorant of his fellow-countrymen, appear to detract in the slightest degree from that lofty independence of character which he had heretofore maintained, and which, I will venture to say, never to the end of his career was for a moment lowered.

It was the happy lot of Mr Bright to unite so many and such distinguished intellectual gifts that, if we had had need to dwell upon them alone, we should have presented a dazzling picture to the world; but it was also his happy lot to teach us moral lessons, and by the simplicity, by the consistency, and by the unfailing courage and constancy of his life, to present to us a combination of qualities so elevated in their nature as to carry us at once into a higher atmosphere. The sympathies of Mr Bright were not only strong, but active; they were not sympathies which can answer to the calls made upon them for the moment, but they were the sympathies of a man who sought far and near for objects on which to bestow the inestimable advantages of his eloquence and of his courage. In Ireland, in the days when the support of the Irish cause was rare; in India, where the support of the native races was rarer still; in America, at the time when Mr Bright probably foresaw the ultimate issue of the great struggle of 1861, and when he stood as the representative of an exceedingly small portion of the educated community of this country—although undoubtedly he represented a very considerable part of the national sentiment—in all these cases Mr Bright went far outside the mere necessities of his calling. Not only subjects which demanded his attention as a Member of this House, but whatever touched him as a man, whatever touched him as a Christian, and whatever touched him as a member of the great Anglo-Saxon race—all these questions obtained not only his unasked and sincere advocacy, but his enthusiastic aid. All the causes which are associated with the names to which I have referred, as well as many others, gained from his powerful advocacy an assistance and a distinct advance in the estimation of the world, and made a distinct progress on their road towards triumphant success.

It has thus come about that we feel that Mr Bright is entitled to a higher eulogy than any that could be due to mere intellect, or than any that could be due to mere success. Of mere success he was indeed a conspicuous example; in intellect he might lay claim to a most distinguished place. But the charac-

ter of the man lay deeper than his intellect, deeper than his eloquence, deeper than anything that could be described as seen upon the surface. The supreme eulogy which is his due is, I apprehend, that he lifted political life to a higher elevation and to a loftier standard. He has thereby bequeathed to his country the character of a statesman which can be made the subject not only of admiration and of gratitude, but even of what I do not exaggerate in calling—as it has been well called already by one of his admiring eulogists—reverential contemplation.

The right hon. gentleman said that he trusted there would be no note of dissonance in the utterances of to-night upon the claims, the merits, and the distinctions of Mr Bright, and I may safely say that on that score all apprehension may be dismissed. In the encomiums that have sprung up from every quarter there is no note of dissonance; there is no discordant minority, however small; the sense of his countrymen is the sense of unanimity. It goes forth throughout the length and breadth of the land, and I do not know that any statesman of my time has ever had the happiness to receive on his removal from this passing world honours and approval at once so enthusiastic, so universal, and so unbroken. And yet, sir, none could better have dispensed with the tributes of the moment, because the triumphs of his life are triumphs recorded in the advance of his country and in the condition of his countrymen. His name remains indelibly written in the annals of this Empire. aye, indelibly written, too, upon the hearts of the great and ever-spreading race to which he belonged—that race in whose wide expansion he rejoiced, and whose power and pre-eminence he believed to be alike full of glory and of promise for the best interests of mankind.

# THE ROYAL GRANT

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JULY 25, 1889

On July 2nd a message was read in the House of Commons from Her Majesty, asking the House to make provision for Prince Albert Victor and for Princess Louise, the eldest children of the Prince of Wales, the latter of whom was then about to be married to the Earl of Fife. On July 4th a Select Committee was appointed "to inquire into the former practice of this House with respect to provisions for members of the Royal Family, and to report to the House upon the principles which in that respect it is expedient to adopt in the future." Of this Committee Mr Gladstone was a member, and his proposal that the Prince of Wales should receive £36,000, as an increase of his annual income, and should provide for his children from this sum, was adopted. On July 25, on the motion to go into Committee to consider the question, Mr Labouchere, Member for Northampton, moved as an amendment that an address should be presented to Her Majesty, setting forth, *inter alia*, "that the funds now at the disposal of Her Majesty and of the members of her family are adequate, without further demands upon the taxpayers, to enable suitable provision to be made for Her Majesty's grandchildren." It was defeated by 398 to 116. In the course of the debate Mr Gladstone spoke; he also took part in the preliminary discussions on July 4th and 9th.

My hon. friend the senior member for Northampton, who has moved the Amendment, found it necessary for his purpose—and I own it appeared to me that the nature of his argument required it—to occupy a very considerable portion of the time of the House. My hon. friend who seconded the Amendment, has also entered at great length into this subject; but I will offer the House at least this consolation—that I do not think there is any call upon me, or that there would be any sort of warrant for me, to follow either of those examples.

But there is one portion of the speech of my hon. friend the seconder of the Amendment on which I think I ought to say a word. For a very considerable part of that speech—the whole of the latter part—he has been drawing a contrast, which I should say is highly *ad invidiam*, between the miserable pittance, or at all events the very small amount, which are accorded to the needy in humbler circumstances and stations of life, and that expenditure of thousands which is familiar, free, and unbounded in some other regions of society. I

shall never attempt—my own firm convictions would prevent me from endeavouring—to insinuate that contrasts of that kind do not raise the most serious questions. The seconder<sup>1</sup> of the Amendment says that he stands upon moral considerations. These are moral considerations, and moral considerations of a deep and most important character; but in my opinion they are not so much applicable to the question that we are discussing to-day, as they are to the general state of things in a society where enormous wealth exists, where luxury prevails, where vast classes of men, many of those probably sitting in this House, freely spend upon those objects of luxury and upon the real or supposed necessities of their stations those enormous sums which undoubtedly stand in the most painful contrast with what the State can do—I will go further and say with what the State ought to do—with respect to its numerous and humble dependents.

But is it fair to turn the whole strength of this contrast upon the Royal Family? The Royal Family have large incomes—you may say they have enormous incomes—and so have other men. The difference, the broad difference, between the Royal Family and the other men of gigantic wealth in this country is mainly this—that the wealth of the Royal Family is in large measure associated with, and even tied down to, the discharge of public duty, whereas the wealthy men of the country are under practically no responsibility, except the responsibility to their own consciences; and I own I think it is hard, not that these contrasts should be drawn—in our own minds and consciences we cannot draw them too much or too stringently—but that they should be drawn for the purpose of turning the whole public feeling on the subject against a Grant to the Royal Family. I have said these words because I think in justice they are required. I do not suppose that all members of Royal families are patterns of what I may call Christian economy; but I want to know how many amongst us can pretend to offer such patterns to the world? How many of the wealthy are there whose expenditure would bear the microscopic examination

which we are now invited to apply exclusively to Royalty, whose incomes at least, as I have said, stand in some palpable, some intelligible, some permanent relation to the discharge of public duties, ay, and to public expenditure, less connected, perhaps, with that which immediately falls under the name of moral duties, but still expenditure in which the people at large feel a deep interest, the presence of which they view with satisfaction, and the absence of which they would view with regret?

My hon. friend who moved the Amendment has referred, in terms of which I certainly have no reason to complain, to the substantial differences in the Party on this side of the House, or rather, I may say, among the Parties on this side of the House—for we are happy enough to have three of them—on this subject. I shall not follow him far into that discussion. I can only say I do not believe I shall excite any adverse comments on the other side of the House if I, like him, take a cheerful view of the operations of these differences upon our political relations. We are not so young in politics, in Liberal politics, and we are not so entirely unaware of the freedom of the action of public or private opinion which politics require, as to be alarmed in respect to our great and broad public principles and in respect to the large issues which are at present before the country, because there are undoubtedly on this question considerable divergencies of opinion among the members of the Liberal Party.

I thank my hon. friend for what he was good enough to say as to the allowance he would make for me as standing in a peculiar position. Indeed I do not deny that there is a certain peculiarity of position in one who has had to give responsible and much considered judgments upon questions of this class for a period of between 40 and 50 years, for it is 46 years since as a member of the Cabinet I was first a party to a demand upon Parliament for a Royal Grant. I do not, however, myself perceive that there is anything in the peculiarity of my position which should render my conclusion a conclusion fit to be rejected by reasonable men. I certainly should argue this question upon grounds which appear



to me at least to be broad and general. It is for the House and the public to judge, no doubt, whether these grounds are sound or not. They will not require me to encroach largely upon the time of the House. Let me at once direct myself to the issues that are fairly raised by my hon. friend.

The issues raised by the Amendment are these. In the first place, that Her Majesty and the other members of her family are possessed of a sufficiency of means to avoid application to Parliament; and in the second place, that large economies might take place if further funds are needed for the purpose of Royal endowment. I will first say a few words upon the subject of economy. And I beg the House to bear in mind, that it is difficult, as I believe, even for a great nobleman of this country—I take a man than whose name none is more honoured, though I differed from him in political opinion, I take the late Duke of Buccleuch—it is extremely difficult for such a man, especially, as in the case of the late Duke, if he gives much time and care and thought to his public engagements, to enforce in his great establishments real economy and thrift. Sir, it is ten times more difficult for a Sovereign. I will go further, and say it is almost impossible, unless the Sovereign be strongly backed by the action of the Government, and unless the Government be strongly backed by the action of the House of Commons. I am sanguine enough to believe with my hon. friend that there is some room for economy. I, however, must say, and here I fall back on the seconder of the Motion, that I am averse to all economy which would not only affect the dignity, but which would impair the splendour of the Court. In a society, constituted as this society is, the Court ought to be a splendid Court: and not only so, but I will go further, and say, that a Court amply provided, but not extravagantly provided with means, worked in a genial spirit, and conforming to a high moral standard, is one of the most powerful, one of the most inestimable agencies which, in a country like this, you can bring to bear upon the tone of society, and by means of which you can raise the standard of conduct from class to class throughout the kingdom.

I believe, however, with my hon. friend, that there is room

for economy, but the difference between us probably would be this—that I estimate the difficulty of enforcing that economy as very great. I do not doubt that you might, as my hon. friend has pointed out, pick out some salary here and there, from which deductions might be made. You might be fortunate enough in particular cases—such as political cases, for instance—to get rid of the embarrassing considerations of vested interests. But I own I have very great doubts indeed whether my hon. friend has estimated aright the complicated nature of the process that would have to be instituted, the firmness that it would require, the time that it would demand, the strength of influence and the weight of authority which must be at its back, in order to make it effectual; and I am by no means certain, Sir, that a very small, shallow, and partial attempt at thrift in the Royal Household—I mean in the form of the public relations of the Sovereign with Parliament and the country—I am by no means certain that it would be well to attempt such small, partial, and shallow reforms in the Civil List and in the Royal Household, and the whole of the interests connected with them, unless at the very best opportunity. I have very great doubts—I speak simply as a private individual, for it would be most presumptuous for me to speak for anybody else, and most of all even to conjecture what may be the views of Her Majesty—but I own it dwells in my own mind that it is extremely doubtful whether there can be that thorough reconsideration, which, in the whole of its most complicated anatomy, the question of regal expenditure demands, except in connection with the settlement of a new Civil List. I own that if it be Her Majesty's impression, of which I have no knowledge whatever, that at an advanced period of life it is doubtful whether it would be wise or fit to attempt to initiate a scheme of that kind, I can not only sympathise with the feeling, but I am not at all indisposed to believe that the judgment formed is a sound judgment. Although I believe that great fruits will be reaped from a bold and systematic prosecution of this subject at the right time, I am by no means clear that that time has actually at this moment arrived.

So much with regard to that subject; but there remains what I hold to be the main question raised by my hon. friend. From his Motion, he considers that there are now sufficient means in the hands of Her Majesty and of the other members of her family. I do not quite know what interpretation I am to give to the phrase "other members of her family." The only one who I suppose can possibly be in the view of my hon. friend besides the Prince of Wales is the Duke of Edinburgh. But it is quite evident that the Duke of Edinburgh does not enter into this question at all, for it will be seen from a previous statement of the intentions of Her Majesty's Government that no claim can at any time be made on his part upon the public in reference to a Royal marriage. Consequently, I shall assume that the persons indicated here by my hon. friend are Her Majesty and the Prince of Wales. Now, let us consider the case of Her Majesty and of the Prince of Wales. My hon. friend who has seconded this Motion, has shown himself to be possessed of a lively imagination. He deals in millions, of the existence of which, in an available or a profitable form, I believe no other human being is cognizant. Further, he has shown to his own satisfaction that the private income, or what he calls the pin-money of Her Majesty, amounts to the sum of a quarter of a million a year.

Now, Sir, my estimate of this rather important question is that if he had said half that amount, he would have been very much nearer indeed to the mark; and I am sorry that a phrase like that of pin-money should have been introduced. I do not think my hon. friend can have appreciated equitably the position of the Sovereign in such a matter. Take the system, for instance, of pensions. I will venture to say that there is no establishment in the country in which the system of pensioning is practised as it is in the establishment of the Sovereign, and that not altogether from pure benevolence or choice, but from a kind of necessity growing out of the peculiarities of the Royal position, which peculiarities you must take into view if you want to arrive at any sound conclusion.

I will not enter now into the details of the subject, but all I will say is this—that what we may call the free income of Her Majesty is subject to a number of calls to which you would find it difficult to discover anything fairly analogous in the expenditure of private persons. I am not here to maintain that Her Majesty has not free available means which seem to be destined by nature, by propriety, and by Her Majesty's own most gracious considerate and prudent choice to the endowment of her family. Her Majesty has been blessed with a very numerous offspring. Under the circumstances that are now before us the proposal is that of no part of that posterity shall we hear in the second generation except the children of the Prince of Wales. That appears to me to be a most important item to take into our view. I feel no hesitation whatever in accepting the considerate offer of Her Majesty. I do not agree with those portions of the Report of the Committee which would rather, I think, lead to the inference that there was some duty incumbent upon Parliament which Parliament was unwilling to perform. I make no such admission. In my opinion Parliament has always in this matter been very liberal and loyal, and, notwithstanding any little indications of diverging opinions, such I heartily hope and believe it will still continue to be. Her Majesty has been pleased to mention one great item which ought probably to be called the principal item—the large increase that has taken place since the opening of the reign in the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster. I feel that nothing can be more just and legitimate than that Her Majesty's generosity should, with these means in her possession, offer to take upon herself the charge of her grandchildren, and nothing can be more fair or more compatible with our duty, as well to our constituencies as to the Crown, than that we should accept the offer. It is a very serious one. It involves a very large expenditure. I think the seconder of the Amendment stated that the sum of £300,000 or £400,000 would be an ample sum for all the Queen's grandchildren. I must own that, although £300,000 or £400,000 may sound a very large sum of money, I do not admit that it is an adequate sum to make provision—respectable, creditable, honour-

able, and moderate provision for so numerous a body as, happily, the Queen's grandchildren have now come to be. It is not denied by those who oppose the Amendment that Her Majesty has available means. Her Majesty has made an offer. We propose to act on that offer, and to give to Parliament an exemption from the possibility of proposals for the maintenance of many among the members of the various branches of the Royal Family. The acceptance of this offer on our part will impose upon Her Majesty a very heavy burden, greatly exceeding the sum which the hon. member has mentioned, and may possibly require much prudence, thrift, and forethought on the part of Her Majesty to enable her to bear it without disparagement to all her other Royal duties. Well, Sir, that being the case, I ask myself again whether my hon. friend really has met the case in his contention that the Prince of Wales ought to be possessed of funds to enable him to undertake the care of his children. I presume he would not push that doctrine so far as to make it embrace all the liabilities and expenses that might arise in the event of the Prince's accession to the Throne. The question is whether for the period while the Prince of Wales remains Prince of Wales, it is fair or rational to expect that he should take upon himself the maintenance of his children as they grow up, as they depart from under his roof, as they become the heads of separate establishments, or as they enter into families where, if the families are rich, still, being the grandchildren of the Queen and daughters of the Heir Apparent, they ought not in my judgment to enter absolutely penniless, but if they are poor should have provided for them a moderate income by the State, which would, perhaps, form a very considerable part of their whole available means.

My hon. friend says that the revenue of the Duchy of Cornwall was only £46,000 in 1863 and is now £61,000. Yes, Sir; but my hon. friend has been favoured by fortune in this respect. It is true it was only £46,000 in 1863, but it was £52,000 in 1862, and £50,000 in the year 1864. It rose regularly and rapidly until it had passed the figure of £60,000 in 1869, and since 1869 there are, I think, only two or

three exceptional years in which it has fallen below £60,000. I must point out to my hon. friend what really took place on that occasion. It is my duty to speak of it, because at the time Lord Palmerston made a proposal in Parliament I was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of course it was my duty to make an estimate of the Prince's revenue. And what did we do? We were, of course, perfectly aware that at the moment the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall were under £60,000. But we stated them at £60,000. Why? Because we were providing for a period that was likely to be one of considerable length. At the time of the Prince's marriage the Queen herself had hardly entered middle age, and there was every prospect of a lengthened as well as a happy reign. In these circumstances we gave that estimate of the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall which would be a fair and moderate estimate as applied to the general state of the Prince's fortune during the time that he might be expected to continue Duke of Cornwall. It appears to me that was the proper course, and it is undoubtedly the truth that if we had been compelled to estimate the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall at £46,000, which was the revenue of that particular year, we should have been obliged to ask for a larger payment on behalf of the Prince out of the Consolidated Fund. Sir, on the whole that estimate of £60,000 a year has proved to be a remarkably accurate one; a little, but only a very little under the mark; and in these circumstances the point is this—diversely from the case of Her Majesty, who is receiving considerable revenues from the Duchy of Lancaster, which were not in immediate contemplation at the commencement of the reign, the Prince of Wales is receiving almost exactly what he received before. At present there is some tendency to diminish the very sum which was held out by Parliament as necessary for the maintenance of the Prince's dignity as Heir Apparent to the Throne.

Well, Sir, the revenues of the Prince of Wales have remained, I may say, constant, and have corresponded in a remarkable degree with the estimate then made. It will be admitted that circumstances have tended somewhat to throw upon the Prince of Wales an amount of public duty in connection with institutions as well

as with ceremonials which was larger than could reasonably have been expected, and in regard to which every call has been honourably and devotedly met from a sense of that public duty.

My hon. friend will see that the argument in the case of the Duchy of Lancaster has no application whatever to the case of the Prince of Wales. But he compares the income of the Prince of Wales with that of a private gentleman. I must say I deprecate that comparison if it is attempted to push it to any length. The Prince of Wales with £110,000 a year does not possess the same command over the expenditure of that money, or the saving of that money, as a duke or any inferior personage in society with a corresponding income, and that must be borne in mind if you are to deal justly and fairly with a case of this kind.

My hon. friend, however, says that the Prince of Wales had £600,000 in his hands when provision was made for him by Parliament at that time. Sir, that is perfectly true; it is also true that a very large portion of that sum, I think between £200,000 and £300,000 was laid out in the acquisition of Sandringham. Was not that a becoming acquisition? It appears to me it was perfectly becoming, and I am not sure that I might not go a little further, and say it was almost necessary that the Heir Apparent of this country, in the circumstances in which he stood, with no sort of prospect of an early accession to the Throne, should have a place in the country according to the habits of the people of this country, where he could exercise hospitality, where he might follow rural pursuits, and where he might acquire and cherish a love of home, and conform to that truly British standard to which we all like to see our Sovereign and other Royal personages conform.

Let me call the attention of my hon. friend to a point he has not taken in view. It is true, he said, that the Sovereign of this country has, as she ought to have, great and noble palaces maintained for her use. It is also true that these palaces are splendidly furnished, and that every appliance of life exists in them in abundance, almost in a condition of redundancy. But the condition of the Prince of Wales is a totally different one. He had no such succession. I believe

it would be correct to say that when the Prince of Wales had provision made for him by Parliament he was scarcely the owner of a silver spoon. He had Marlborough House, no doubt. It was provided for him; but I am not aware that it was furnished. If I remember right, it was a question of the walls of Marlborough House and the maintenance of the fabric. Everything else had to be provided by the Prince. Therefore, my hon. friend will see that very little was to be expected from the source to which he alluded. Now, sir, my hon. friend who seconded the motion quoted from Lord Brougham what I may call an excellent expression—that the measure of the gifts of Parliament ought to be the necessities of the Crown; and, of course, by analogy that applies to the case of the Prince of Wales. It seems to me that is a very sound doctrine. I do not admit any liability of Parliament, apart from the necessities of the Crown, estimated honourably, liberally, and with a due reference to what this country is, and what the Sovereign of this country ought to be. I admit no other claim whatever; but I say, on that claim, in my opinion, Her Majesty now graciously offers to assume a heavy burden upon herself, which is as much as we can reasonably ask. And with respect to the Prince of Wales, he has fulfilled the contract, so far as there was a contract; he has fulfilled the expectations which Parliament was entitled to form with respect to his income and expenditure; and it would not be rational on our part to suppose it was possible for him to produce a sum of many thousands a year for the free and separate maintenance of his children.

I think, therefore, that as to economy it is a most fruitful and most important subject, and I trust it will receive, whenever the proper time arrives—even now, it may be,—due consideration. It may be right that the preparation of a new Civil List should be anticipated, so far as all these inquiries are concerned. It is a most important subject. But you cannot make it available for the present juncture to any serious extent. With respect even to the possession of funds, I think I have shown that there are none upon which we can attempt to throw the entire burden of what is now demanded from us. Well now, sir, let me ask the



House for one moment before I sit down just to consider how this question stands as a whole. My hon. friend the mover of the amendment spoke of it as a question—I do not remember the exact words—which has been reduced within secondary dimensions. Happily, sir, it has been reduced within secondary dimensions; but there are many stages in a great process. They begin from the reign of George III. Even the reign of George IV., as compared with that of George III., marks a certain commencement of the action of public opinion, and of an improved handling of this most important subject, in respect of the means to be placed at the disposal of the Sovereign. The reign of William IV. made another and greater advance. The reign of Her Majesty at the commencement again placed Parliament in a much more forward condition; and that one point, the greatest of all, was attained—that Parliament should not be subject from time to time to those most objectionable applications for the discharge of royal debts. Well, sir, how do we now stand? Is there no further progress made in the matter as it now comes before us? I do not say we are now going to do everything that is desirable to be done. Very far from it; and even the Report of the Committee, with some points of which I do not agree, contains most important references to this subject of a future juncture.

Let us see, then, how we stand. In the first place, I think it will be admitted that the Prince of Wales, and Her Majesty on behalf of the Prince of Wales, have not been precipitate in making this application. The period of coming of age has generally been marked in the case of a prince as the period for making an application to Parliament. But Prince Albert Victor is, I think, twenty-four years of age, and his younger brother has likewise for some time been of age. That, however, is not the only point. In my opinion, the question of the grandchildren of the reigning Sovereign, other than the children of the Heir-Apparent, is settled—I think for all time—I admit not by a formal withdrawal. But the right hon. gentleman has a right to state that, and those who object to his course have a right to urge the statement against him. I do not enter into that

controversy ; but I give a most confident opinion, founded upon such observation of public affairs as has been within my power, that this claim has as completely disappeared from the region of what may be termed practical politics as if it had been withdrawn by a deed upon parchment regularly stamped and sealed. Well, sir, what remains ? What remains is that we have to consider the case of the children of the Heir-Apparent. The Heir-Apparent, as I say, had not the power of producing £30,000 or even £20,000 a year for the purpose of maintaining his children when the day of need arose. But, in making provision for them, Parliament will be asked to adopt the plan which absolutely secures us during the remainder of this reign from any renewal of these very painful controversies. I think that a very great advantage gained for us and for the public. I will not say for the stability of the Throne, for happily that stability is beyond the reach of the breezes or the gales of opinion which may be set in motion on these particular occasions. But the extinction of the possibility of the renewal of these controversies for the remainder of the reign is another great step in the right direction. Let me do right hon. gentlemen opposite justice, although I am not wholly satisfied with all parts of the Report. I hope the House will observe the important words in the paragraph last but one. This is the paragraph which contains the practical proposal :—

“ In order to prevent repeated applications to Parliament, and to establish the principle that the provision for children should hereafter be made out of grants adequate for that purpose which have been assigned to their parents.”

These are not mere words. They are primarily the basis on which the proposal is founded ; and what is now asked on the one hand undeniably secures us from controversy during the remainder of the reign, and, on the other hand, as undeniably points to the construction of a new Civil List as the occasion when the whole question must be settled in principle and in practice, and likewise indicates that mode of settlement which my hon. friend, I think, will be the first to recognise as sound and just.

I have thought it my duty to enter at once into this debate. Undoubtedly I admit that on every occasion our highest obligation as the Commons of England is to the constituencies which we represent. But we are servants of the Crown as well as servants of the people. Having, then, as I hope, done my duty to the people, I have been endeavouring, so far as I could, to contribute towards casting this delicate question into a form which in a very short time is, I believe, likely to become perfectly satisfactory. Having done that, I am not ashamed to say that in my old age I rejoice in any opportunity which enables me to testify that whatever may be thought of my opinions, whatever may be thought of my proposals in general politics, I do not forget the service which I have borne for so many years to the illustrious representative of the British Monarchy.

# MR GLADSTONE'S GOLDEN WEDDING

THE NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB, JULY 27th 1889.

In honour of Mr and Mrs Gladstone's Golden Wedding the members of the National Liberal Club, through their Chairman of Committee, Lord Oxenbridge, presented Mr Gladstone with an address and an album, the work of several well-known artists. The presentation took place at the Club; Mrs Gladstone was present.

LORD OXENBRIDGE, my lords, ladies, and gentlemen, you have presented me on my entering within these walls with a double gift—the first, a beautiful album, that I have had the opportunity of examining in another apartment of the club, in which some of our most distinguished artists have condescended to use their genius and their skill in the representation of objects and of scenes which it was deemed might be of the highest interest in connection with the present occasion. And I would wish to be allowed to tender my testimony of gratitude to them for the remarkable manner in which they have contrived to give to the life of an individual that interest which nothing but very high accomplishments and very devoted labour could have sufficed to give. You have also presented me, my lord, with an address full of subjects, all of them relevant to the time and the place in which we meet—some of them of a deep intrinsic interest. Undoubtedly it was difficult to separate the public and political considerations, that are so entwined with the whole record of my life, from the domestic interest which, for ourselves and for all those of our fellow-countrymen who are good enough to sympathize with us, makes the present occasion—the occasion which we reached yesterday—to be one of special importance to us. Well, now, let me say one word—and it will be a very brief word, for this is not the occasion for political discourses—a very brief word on the references that have been made in the address to my connection with the political principles that

form a bond of union for all persons within the walls of this club. I shall not feel it necessary, ladies and gentlemen, to introduce topics that could give pain to any one differing from us upon the particular measures that we think most required for the advantage of the country; but I will venture to say, in taking an historical view rather than a view of the moment of the circumstances in which you stand, that, as representatives of a party devoted to the promotion of Liberal principles, you can never be without abundant comfort and consolation. Not only at the time when you are in possession of political power, but also—and sometimes even more conspicuously—when you are excluded from it, your principles advance. They are principles, not of destruction, but of improvement; and the important admissions which belong to it are—I do not say extorted, I do not say extracted, from the mouths and recorded in the action of adversaries—but they are, without the use of any invidious phrase, the inevitable incident of the exercise of power in this country; and, much as there may be to which we are opposed, and much to which we have objected, in the action of the last three years, on the part of the dominant party in Parliament, yet we thankfully record that important principles have been enshrined in our legislation, and serious measures of practical improvement projected and adopted, which show that whatever your position be, either within the favoured precinct or beyond its limits, your work never ceases. It is always advancing from stage to stage and, humanly speaking, you are independent of the leadership, or of the assistance of this man or of that. An internal and undying energy belongs to the cause itself: and you may rest assured that, under the favour of Providence, as it has advanced, so it will advance, and generation after generation will be its rejoicing witnesses.

And now, my Lord Oxenbridge, let me say one word—it must be a very brief word—upon the more personal portions of the address which you have been good enough to read, and in which you have reminded me, by the most seasonable allusions, how little there is in ourselves on which we can rely, how entirely everything that is to make us useful in our genera-

tion, that is to inspire us with personal hope, or to unite us in the bonds of affection with our countrymen, depends upon the influences which flow downwards from a higher power. I thank you, my lord, for these references, and I must say that I feel that there is no description of sentiment which the occurrences of the last few days are so calculated to impress upon the mind, as a very deep sense of personal unworthiness and, if it may be, a real approach towards the most essential of all gifts—namely, the gift of humility. I am ashamed, ladies and gentlemen, of the kindness that has been shown to me. When I speak of my wife, when I acknowledge that there is a greater justice in the tributes that you have so kindly paid to her, I there enjoy a relative and comparative freedom. And no words that I could use would ever suffice to express the debt that I owe her in relation to all the offices that she has discharged on my behalf, and on behalf of those who are nearest and dearest to us, during the long and the happy period of our conjugal union. But, for myself, I am indeed deeply gratified by, and I am in no small degree ashamed of, the kindly interest which my countrymen have shown in the arrival of this anniversary, and in recollecting the forms that the manifestation of that feeling has assumed. I hope it will not sound like exaggeration—it is really the phrase dictated by my desire to express what I feel—if I say that I feel myself, as it were, drowned in an ocean of kindness. I should in vain labour to find words in which to develop that sentiment. I will leave it as it is. It expresses the state of mind of one who feels himself unworthy to look in the face these remarkable demonstrations of confidence and of love. I trust to your goodness to appreciate the sincerity of that sentiment, and to believe that it is one that can never be effaced from, and never can for a moment be weakened in either of our hearts.

Allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to reciprocate your goodwill, and to say what a noble calling I deem it to be to serve a people such as this. What opportunities of good to our fellow-creatures it has opened; what cheering and pleasant anticipations of the future; what bright recollections of

the past; how all its difficulties and the pain attending upon its contentions seem to vanish in the distance and to become light as dust, when compared with our conviction that the substantial nature of the objects that we have in view is associated with the highest or with very high interests of mankind. I wish you, ladies and gentlemen—few, if any, of whom have attained to the period of life that it has been allotted to me to reach—I wish that you may, each of you in your sphere, be enabled to employ the gifts which God withholds from none in the discharge of those noble duties which are open at all times to the patriotism of the English citizens. Within these walls such words cannot be inappropriate, and they are words suited, not to the narrow sphere within which I speak, but to every district, every portion, every corner of our country. It is among her most characteristic and distinguishing points that she expects every man to do his duty, not only in the private sphere of the neighbourhood where he lives, but on a larger scale. The laws we have lately adopted<sup>1</sup> tend to drive home upon every heart, every mind, and every conscience a deeper sense of that duty. The sphere is enlarged, the call is louder than it ever was before, the man who does not listen to it would be unworthy of the name of Briton, but, on the other hand, we are persuaded that as in former times our countrymen have not been unable to play a leading part among the nations of the world, so in the times to come they will, by the help of God, rise more and more to a consciousness of the greatness of the country to which they belong, and of the high providential purposes which are associated with its wealth, its resources, and its power. They hold it as a trust committed to them from above, to use alike for their own advantage and for the advantage of their brethren dispersed throughout the earth. Allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to ask you to accept the assurance, not only of our gratitude and of our good will, but our earnest desire that you collectively and individually, may be partakers in full of the blessings which belong to you as Britons and as Christians.

<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Bill, 1888.

# THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

PARIS, SEPTEMBER 7, 1889

Mr Gladstone was entertained at a banquet in Paris by the Paris Society of Political Economy. His health was proposed by M. Léon Say.

MESDAMES ET MESSIEURS,—Si quelques personnes ont appris quelque chose de moi, à l'heure actuelle, je leur demanderai de m'accorder quelque indulgence. C'est, en effet, à votre indulgence que j'ai recours. Les sentiments de reconnaissance que j'éprouve me remplissent au point que je ne sais de quelle manière reconnaître les louanges si peu méritées que m'a prodiguées M. Léon Say, mon ami, votre digne président. Car c'est dans votre langue si belle et si célèbre que je voudrais essayer au moins de vous exprimer ce que je ressens.

Je voudrais d'abord vous parler de l'Exposition. Je me souviens avec plaisir que c'est mon pays qui, il y a trente-huit ans, a eu l'honneur de commencer à faire des expositions, à donner une forme corporelle et visible à cette idée devenue si féconde. Mais il était réservé à la République française d'aujourd'hui de donner à cette idée le développement si merveilleux que j'ai tant admiré depuis que je suis à Paris, à cette idée si fructueuse pour l'industrie et les arts, pour la paix, la bonne amitié entre les nations, pour tout ce qui intéresse le citoyen, qui, tout en restant citoyen de sa patrie, est aussi un peu citoyen du monde.

J'ai été frappé d'admiration en présence de l'impulsion si remarquable que cette Exposition a donnée à la vie toujours si énergique de Paris. Paris, aujourd'hui, me paraît comme une ville que je n'ai jamais connue auparavant. Il me semble plus magnifique, plus imposant que je l'ai connu autrefois.

Je voudrais parler aussi, non de la situation politique intérieure de la France—ce serait une impertinence de ma part; je ne voudrais pas m'immiscer dans vos affaires—mais je voudrais



dire quelques mots pour rendre un témoignage et remplir un devoir.

J'ai connu la République française pendant dix ans que j'ai été chef du cabinet anglais, et pendant ce temps j'ai tellement été mêlé aux affaires internationales entre la France et l'Angleterre que j'ai pu apprécier pleinement sa capacité à remplir toutes les fonctions, dans leur forme républicaine, d'un pays civilisé, d'un des premiers pays du monde. Pendant ces dix années, bien des questions épineuses sans doute ont été soulevées. Le gouvernement français, je dois le dire, a répondu à tous les besoins et n'a jamais manqué à la véritable amitié qui unit et qui, je l'espère, unira toujours les nations française et anglaise. Les procédés de la France ont toujours fait une grande impression sur mon esprit; et, je le répète, son gouvernement a toujours satisfait à tous les devoirs qui incombent à une grande nation civilisée, chrétienne, progressive.

Qu'il me soit permis de vous dire, Mesdames et Messieurs de dire à M. Léon Say, que je souhaite et que ma nation, j'en suis persuadé, souhaite avec moi, que la France ne manque jamais à son rôle et ne perde jamais sa place dans la marche de l'humanité chrétienne et civilisée vers le but que doit rechercher tout homme de bon sens et de bonne volonté.

Je me souviens d'un petit incident dont j'ai gardé une profonde impression. Quand les affaires des Indes orientales étaient sous la tutelle de la Compagnie des Indes, il y avait en Angleterre un collège sur le frontispice duquel ces mots latins étaient gravés: *Ne facias tua culpa minores*. C'était un avertissement à tous les élèves d'avoir à faire leur devoir et à se souvenir de la grandeur de ce devoir.

Eh ! bien, si cela m'était permis, je dirais à tous les Français : *Ne facias tua culpa minores*. Oui, que la France soit toujours, comme elle l'a été, au premier rang des nations européennes dans l'accomplissement de l'œuvre de la civilisation et du bonheur de l'humanité.

# THE WORKMAN AND HIS OPPORTUNITIES

SALTNEY, OCTOBER 26th, 1889

On the occasion of the opening of new Reading and Recreation Rooms at Saltney, a suburb of Chester, Mr Gladstone made the following speech. On September 12th 1890, he spoke on "Industrial Progress" at the Dee Iron Works.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It gives me great pleasure to accept this address, of which I think that it does high and just honour to its composer, while undoubtedly it does more honour than I deserve to myself. But I shall choose, ladies and gentlemen, a better subject than myself for this occasion. It is said that old age makes people talkative, and more especially fond of giving the history of their own life and experience. Into these matters I shall not largely enter, because I have what I conceive a very interesting occasion presented to me upon a broader ground. I assure you that it is with very great pleasure that I find myself among you to-day, because the very busy life that I lead is so crowded with occupation that it very seldom indeed happens to me to have an opportunity of performing, as I ought to do, a neighbourly duty. And now that such an opportunity has occurred, it gives me sincere satisfaction to make use of it, for the reason I have named; and also because in my opinion, this is a very interesting occasion.

I am happy to say that it is not now a strange thing at all to meet for a purpose such as has gathered us together to-day. Perhaps I ought to say what I consider that purpose to be. I do not consider this to be the mere foundation of a reading room. If this were the foundation of a reading room for those who have ample means of furnishing themselves with mental food, it might be a very right and a very useful undertaking; but it would not present to us the peculiar interest which I think attaches to the

particular institution that we have now to deal with. For this I understand to be a reading room—a place of recreation, a place of study, and a place of improvement—for our fellow-citizens who belong to the class that we call the working men of the country. Now, a far greater interest attaches to such an undertaking as that, first, because our friends of what is termed the working class form the greater number of the community; and secondly, because they have not the same means of providing themselves with the advantages of study and the precious fruits of knowledge that we have; and, moreover, it is also—I will not say an innovation, but I will say it is only a novelty of our own times that such an institution should be founded at all.

Well, if I go back to the days of my youth—and I hope it is the only occasion I shall have to refer to myself—if I go back to the days of my own youth, I think I may say that no such institution as this had ever been heard of. It would have been indeed a very strange thing, as it would then have been thought; for at that time it was considered a very doubtful question indeed—I do not say by wise men, but it was certainly considered by very many men to be a very doubtful question indeed whether it was at all desirable, upon any terms or conditions, to found even primary schools for the working men of the country, and to open to them the first steps in the acquisition of knowledge. Well, this, gentlemen, is indeed a great and happy and blessed change. The lot of daily labour is necessarily a severe one. You will remember that it attaches to the masses of mankind from the beginning of our race, and I suppose it will attach to us to the end of our race. Happy is the man well employed; miserable, in my opinion, is the idle man. The labouring man is happy in respect of his having useful employment, and being able to make it the means of self-support. But at the same time, though it may be an unacceptable, I think it is an undeniable truth that daily labour, continued from morning to night, continued from year's end to year's end, continued from boyhood to old age, makes a severe and trying life. And it is most desirable that such alleviations of that lot, such aids to those who have to undergo it as can be provided for them, should be

freely and liberally provided. Permit me to point out to you very briefly that remarkable alleviations and improvements have come to the mass of our working men within the time to which I have referred. There may be much yet to do, much yet to desire, and I have no doubt that there is; but the change that we have seen—that I have lived to see—has been a great and a blessed change. As I have said, the period starting, we will say, from seventy years ago—the period opens with the time when it was even doubted whether any kind or any degree of education, upon any conditions whatever, should be provided for the working population of the country. All these doubts have been cleared away. The school is now at every person's door; and, moreover, it is not, as it was in the beginning of the century, a place of suffering, a place of tyranny, a place very often of ignorance, almost useless for the purpose which it professed to attain. But the school is now a reality; the teacher is usually a person with his mind set upon his work; and often, I am happy to say, there is a great effusion of love and tenderness in that work, and strong sentiments of attachment to the pupils who are instructed, quite certain to bear fruit, at any rate hopeful to bear fruit, in the lives and characters of those pupils.

I may mention another point of great moment. At the time I am speaking of, the working man was forbidden by law to join with other working men for the purpose of giving value to his labour in the market. Capitalists were powerful, were individually powerful, and were permitted to combine as much as they pleased: but working men might not lay their heads together for their own purposes, might not form their plans or seek by means of communication and combination or by any effective means to promote their common interest or to carry out their plans. There is no doubt there has been very much done since those days to secure a fair remuneration for their labour. They are now, what they ought always to have been, as free as the law can make them to sell their labour in the market at the best price it will yield.

I will now mention another point, and that is the progress of machinery. When it was first introduced, machinery often

appeared to be cruel to working men. The first stage of its application has often entailed a good deal of individual hardship to working men in special cases; but to the working men, in the long run it is an enormous blessing. For what does it do? It relieves them of all the severest parts of their occupation. I remember, in my youth going to see an ironworks where a large number of men were employed. They were stripped down to the waist on account of the violence of the exertion required and the heated temperature, and they were engaged in hammering what are called boiler plates. It is impossible to conceive a finer sight. They were a body of very muscular men, and they wielded enormous hammers. I do not know whether that kind of thing still exists, but I believe that it has in the main disappeared. But this I also remember, that long years after I went to see a great tool work in the town of Oldham, where 5,000 men were employed. I went through the whole of the works, and I may say I did not see one single individual undergoing violent exertion. These five thousand men were all doing the work required of them -- work that required great skill and attention -- but I did not see a man who was undergoing any violent or exhausting labour. That is the effect of machinery. A machine means a power that does not suffer, and yet it is perfectly effective, when directed by human intelligence, in performing that which formerly constituted the most oppressive and difficult portion of the work of the people. That is a great blessing.

Now I turn to another of the points I have to name. In those times the labouring man, from many reasons, could not get the full value of his labour. In order to obtain the full value of any commodity you want to dispose of, it is necessary you should not be tied down to one single market. All you who are men of business are perfectly aware of that. It is necessary for you to have a choice of markets. Labour was a commodity a man had to sell; but he had no choice of markets. There was no freedom of locomotion in the country; no power for the labouring man in one town to see what was going on in another great town, because of the slowness, the expense, and the difficulty of moving from one place to another. And he had

practically no press to help him; newspapers were few and dear. Now all that is changed. See what the locomotion of this country is now. See how all the things that are going on in one part of the country are known to every part of the country through the press; see how, if more assistance is wanted anywhere, how, for a few pence probably, a labouring man may go by the railway from one part to another. Through the same agency of the press he may get information that is valuable to him; and not only in the matter of corporal locomotion, but in that of correspondence and the transmission of public intelligence, and, what is of more importance, the family correspondence between parents and children has been developed so as to be within the reach of all.

In the days of my youth a labouring man, the father of a family, was practically prohibited from corresponding with the members of his family who might be away. How was that? you will ask. Why, on account of the enormous expense of postage. It was such that every poor man was made to pay postage for every piece of paper, running from sixpence to one shilling, and one shilling to one-and-sixpence; and if there were two bits of paper the postage was double, and if three bits of paper it was trebled. But what happened to the rich? It did not affect them. There was a system of franking. I remember it very well. I have franked a good many letters for myself, and I have franked a great many letters for my friends. I remember, when I was a young Member of Parliament, there was nobody more popular about the country than a Member of Parliament. He could frank the letters of the young ladies. Those letters went free. A poor man, whose son and daughter had gone into service, or another, whose son had, perhaps, become a soldier or sailor, or had occasion to remove to a distance for the purposes of his livelihood, had no means of communication except by paying this monstrous fee. But you know how the matter stands now. By the infusion of the skill and courage of Sir Rowland Hill into our system, correspondence is now within the reach of all, and the circulation of intelligence is greatly facilitated. I say that this is valuable

in all ways; but it is as to personal family correspondence that it is the most desirable of all. That is what prevented members of families from communicating with each other; but the facilities now offered for increased correspondence have developed the power of family affection, and have done an enormous deal to promote that union of families which is, really, almost the basis of moral excellence and of national felicity.

I will not say that the whole of the changes since that period have been to the good; I will not say the whole movement has been to the good. I do not think it has. I do not think that all the changes among the upper classes of society have always been on the right side; but this much I will venture to say: that, if not in the entire upper classes of society, yet among portions of those classes there is a livelier, more active, and more practical sense of benevolence than there has existed in past times. There never was a period in which so many wise and good schemes for rendering practical help to those who are in difficulty are devised and put into action. Only last night, in Liverpool, one of these was mentioned to me—one planned and devised on an excellent system by Mr William Rathbone, one of our Members of Parliament. The scheme is devised to supply those of the working classes who are afflicted in their homes with good, well-trained, trustworthy nurses. There are now being established in Liverpool houses where these nurses are being specially trained to go into the dwellings of the poor population at the expense of the benevolent and wise persons who have devised this plan. I only mention this as a single instance of the principle that is widely in operation, and which we cannot but contemplate with the utmost satisfaction, because, while certainly my wish is that the labouring man shall be a self-supporting individual, yet such are the inequalities brought about by sickness, and by unforeseen and unavoidable calamities at certain times and under certain circumstances, it is everywhere right and reasonable that he should receive assistance and help in this way.

I shall not dwell in detail upon some other changes that have taken place. You know what the changes are with

regard to taxation. Now, if we except stimulants—which are fair subjects of taxation—there is but one article—tea—of everything that the working man consumes which is the subject of taxation. True, coffee is the subject of a small tax also. But I think tea is the one great article of national consumption which continues to be subject to taxation. Now, that is a very different story to the time of my youth; for in my youth the working man was subject to taxation, not for the purposes of the State, not to supply the necessary wants of the country, but, I am sorry to say, to increase the rents of the landlords and the profits of the manufacturers. He was compelled to pay extra prices for his bread, and as to his meat he was forbidden—he was forbidden by law to feed upon a foreign animal; for the importation of foreign animals into this country was prohibited. As to his wages, I wish they were higher than they are—but they are a great deal higher than they were. They have been moving in the right direction; and the best authorities say that the working man, on the whole, receives for his labour one-half more, or fifty per cent. more, than he did. That is to say, for every two shillings that he received sixty or seventy years ago, he now receives three. And he is called upon to render less work in return, less work as to time -- but that does not always mean less work, I am happy to say. I am aware that in some employments the hours are still painfully long, sadly too long; but there again there has been an improved movement in the right direction, and this has been developed into many other blessed and beneficial results. Life is lengthened, life is more healthy than it was; the range of disease and physical suffering among the people is narrowed, the evil of pauperism has been reduced within a narrower compass, and I trust you will see that compass a great deal further narrowed. Crime, again, has been diminished, and very largely diminished; prejudices have been removed. The working man no longer looks upon machinery as his enemy, but he knows well enough that in the main, and in the long run, it is not his enemy, but his friend. And, as a consequence of all this, he has acquired an attachment to law; his disposition is not only



to respect, but to aid the enforcement of the law. He regards the law as he regards the machinery—as his friend, and not as his enemy. In that respect, there has been a great change within the period of my life, which I cannot call less than fundamental.

I may mention another thing, which is not the strongest point of our working population, and that is thrift. I am very well aware that for a large portion of the population the real wonder is, not that they do not save a great deal of money, but that they contrive to feed and clothe, and I may say well clothe; their wives and children. Still, you are aware that many of the working men, perhaps, most of the artisans of this country, are able to save something. That, indeed, is a point on which the English people are not very strong as compared with some other foreign countries. In France almost every working man saves. If you see a Frenchman you see a thrifty man. That is more than can be said in England, even of those who are able to save but still, we are making some progress. If I go back to the same period there were Savings Banks in this country, but their utility was almost confined to a certain class—domestic servants, and other persons who were in immediate relations with the wealthier part of the public. Well, we have founded, not yet thirty years ago, a Post Office Savings Bank, which has become the Savings Bank of the people. It is quite true these banks give to the people only a low rate of interest: but then you must recollect that no other person can afford to do, at the same price, the work that is done by them. No private banker can possibly undertake to receive shillings and sixpences, and to give an account of them, and to restore them when wanted, and allow interest upon them. It is a very remarkable fact, which perhaps some of you may not be aware of, that if a man goes to the Post Office Savings Bank and deposits a shilling, and two or three days after he goes again to the bank and takes out the shilling—I hope he will not do so—that operation costs the public, as it used to be computed in the Department, exactly elevenpence, besides paying back the shilling. The investment of these small sums in the Post Office Savings Banks could not be carried out in such a way as to leave room for a high rate of interest; but

then you must all remember this—that a man who has put his money into the Post Office Saving Bank is in no way prevented from getting better interest elsewhere when he can. Nobody asks him to keep his money there, whether it be a shilling or more. He can, I believe, always have it out by giving forty-eight hours' notice. Forty-eight hours' notice is not a very long interval, so that he is not precluded from getting in interest as much as he can obtain in any other way by any investment which he may prefer. And though I do not consider the sum very large for a country that has such a large population and such immense resources, still it is something to say that although the institution of Post Office Savings Banks only took place twenty-six or twenty-seven years ago, they have now got sixty millions of the people's money.

All these are circumstances which are very pleasing to review, and they bring me back to the purpose for which we have met to-day, when the various blessings which the population have received are crowned by this important blessing of greater means of mental improvement. This is the crown of them all. For these blessings, the sentiment that should be inspired in our minds is not the sentiment of pride, with which human nature ought to have very little to do, and the less of it the better, but it is the sentiment of thankfulness. To those amongst us who have had the means of doing more, it is a just cause of humiliation that we have not done more, and a just cause of thankfulness that something, at least, has been done. Next to that sentiment of thankfulness should be, in my opinion, the resolution of every man, and especially every working man, to turn to good account all those advantages. If his condition is capable of improvement, let him recollect what the condition of his father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather was, and let him resolve, by the help of God, to make the best of the circumstances in which he lives. And depend upon it, as a general rule, if he acts upon that principle as a man, he will derive very considerable results from the just and careful use even of means which are within his reach.

But let the working man be on his guard against another

danger. We live at a time when there is a disposition to think that the Government ought to do this and that, and that the Government ought to do everything. There are things which the Government ought to do, and does not do, I have no doubt. In former periods the Government have neglected much, and possibly even now they neglect something. But there is a danger on the other side. If the Government takes into its hands that which the man ought to do for himself, it will inflict upon him greater mischiefs than all the benefits he will have received or all the advantages that would accrue from them. The essence of the whole thing is that the spirit of self-reliance, the spirit of true and genuine manly independence, should be preserved in the minds of the people, in the minds of the masses of the people, in the minds of every member of that class. If he loses his self-reliance, if he learns to live in a craven dependence upon wealthier people rather than upon himself, you may depend upon it he incurs mischiefs for which no compensation can be made.

Well, now, with those ideas let me come to this question again of the means of improvement --the means of improvement now happily increasing all over the country. I am very glad to hear that your institution is an institution that is thriving and flourishing, with an increase of members, which is the first condition of its prosperity. I am speaking of it all along as a working man's institute. I hope the working men of Saltney—not only those who are here, but those who may not be here—will understand that this institute is for them and for their benefit, that it is for their benefit that we are endeavouring to promote this library, and that it has a peculiar interest in our eyes. This library is intended, no doubt, for relief and recreation. There will be here plenty of books. Books are a source of innocent and wholesome recreation. There will be also athletic sports and games, and other facilities for a man to gain pleasure and recreation. But that is a secondary purpose for books. There is another purpose for books, which is to enlarge the mind, to brace the mind, to enable the people to find pleasure not only in the relaxation of

literature, but in the hard work, in the stiff thought of literature. The hard work of literature conveys to those who pursue it in sincerity and truth not only utility, but also real enjoyment. Well, it is very little that I can say to you with advantage, because other people are more competent than I am to talk to you about subjects embraced in the works which are possessed in your library, and to tell you how in the case of books the mind may be usefully applied.

In the first place, I will say one word about manual industry. I wish to dispel any notion that may be entertained that manual industry is necessarily an ignoble thing. On the contrary, it admits of an elevation to a very high point of excellence. A good illustration of that is in the case of a sculptor. Compare a sculptor and a stonemason. The stonemason has in many cases come to be a sculptor. He studies form in his work as a stonemason. He studies to see if he can attain precision of form. Then, if he can conceive the idea of beauty in form, that is all that is wanted to enable him to acquire the first rudiments of art, and by continued effort and by continued practice he rises higher. Rely upon it, although I know there are many variations and differences in the kind of manual labour, rely upon it manual labour is honourable, not only because it is useful, but honourable, even beyond the measure of its direct utility, when directed to honourable aims and honourable purposes. You have a multitude of cases where, by means of great mental improvement, men have risen to very high positions. And much higher in many cases have men risen through manual improvement than they are now likely to rise by going in for, or by causing their children hastily to go in for, what is commonly designated head work.

I suppose there are various subjects of interest that will recommend themselves to you in connection with this institute for special notice. You will, I think, no doubt, be very desirous to learn all you can about the different industries of the country, because it is through these industries you may yourselves aim at honourable advancement by acquiring a correct knowledge of the details of these industries, and thus you may im-

mensely improve the advantages of your position in life, I make no doubt that in these days of the great progress of natural science there must be multitudes of workmen in almost every walk of industry who are desirous of turning to account all the opportunities they may have to lay hold upon some of the branches of natural science. They are of enormous advantage in the aggregate, and the field is a field open to you all. There is hardly any person who may not learn something and may not do something in it. We have often had to recognise working men as the fathers of the most valuable inventions. Now you are to bear in mind that Englishmen are supposed to be outstripped in the race of invention by the Americans. The Americans are supposed to be our children, and there are certain things in which they have had an even higher education than Englishmen. I mean the education of practical life, and they are extremely strong in the whole business of invention. But every workman here has a fair chance to make himself useful, and to do himself good by keeping his eyes open, observing his work and the conditions under which he performs his work, and by studying how these conditions can be met, how labour can be economised, how useful products can best be brought out of the bowels of the earth and fitted for the service of man, and thus provide better means of executing the works that they have in hand. This is a fruitful field, and a field open for working men; a field in which many and many a working man has gained advantage to himself, and done great service to his fellow-creatures.

There is another subject I am going to recommend to my friends the working men, which I hope they will always cherish as well as they can, although it is not so immediately connected with the results of temporal gain and advantage, and that is the study of history. To every Englishman the history of his own country should be followed with the greatest interest. Depend upon it, a human being, if he is to grow, will find that one of the best and most certain means of growth is that he should dwell not only in the present, but also in the future, and not only in the present and the future, but also in the past, and that is emi-

nently characteristic of Englishmen. Lately I was reading a work, a very clever work, by a French author,<sup>1</sup> who spoke of the method in which great constitutional improvements were carried out in England and France. He said that in seasons of difficulty and revolution in France, they took the opportunity to frame declarations of principle, and to write new Constitutions. The French have immense talent, great powers of abstract argument, and they framed those documents probably more cleverly than we could; but as the writer says, whenever there has been a revolution in England, such as that of 1688, they did not go about framing these constitutions, but they looked back into their old history, and inquired what their fathers did before them. They went back, for instance, at the time of the revolution in 1688, 400 or 500 years before for precedents. Don't believe the people who tell you that the English Constitution began in the year 1800. It is as old as the hills. I shall not be charged with immoderate language if I say that it is about 1000, or certainly 500 or 600 years ago, when our English forefathers began to develop those grand fundamental ideas which now constitute the basis of British liberty. Therefore, depend upon it, in the study of English history you do a great deal for bracing and developing your own character, and for fitting yourselves to take charge of any employment or position to which others may call you.

But there are three other subjects outside of English history which I wish very much to recommend, as I have found them myself most interesting, most fruitful, most instructive portions of the field of history. The first is the French history during the 17th and 18th centuries. In the beginning of the 17th century France was under one of the greatest of her kings, Henry IV. His life was terminated by the hand of the assassin. After him came a series of kings, Louis XIII., XIV., and XV., who brought France chronologically down almost to the period of the Revolution, because the reign of Louis XVI. found the history of France so disturbed in its main features, that he could do, and certainly did do, but little to modify the forces that

<sup>1</sup> Monsieur Boutmy.

were in growing activity. Then came the great outbreak, the French Revolution, the most vast and the most terrible series of changes known to the history of man. Then came periods of great excesses, of fear, suspicion, cruelty, and there are probably none who are not aware that most of the principal actors in that Revolution are held up to the disapproval and even to the execration of mankind. In my opinion, that is but half the truth. Anybody who wants to understand the French Revolution must go back two centuries before it, and he will find perhaps 160 or 180 years of abominable mis-government, which it is my firm conviction was far more responsible for all the errors, and violence, and crimes of the French Revolution than the generation by whose allowance those crimes were committed. It was a lengthened time of gross neglect of every duty of Government. It was a period of ambitious, useless, sanguinary, wicked wars; it was a period of gross cruelty and unremitting oppression upon the people; it was a period when law had no existence for the oppressed population, when arbitrary will determined their destiny; it was a period when vice displayed itself brazen-faced in the view of all, and by its pestilential example did everything that it could to ruin and destroy them. All public right and public law had been so long and so systematically trampled under foot, that the very idea of them had almost been effaced from the popular mind; and, in entering upon a course of difficult changes, the French nation had largely lost hold of that conception which would have been the surest guarantee against excess.

After that came the beginning of the French Revolution, and when this was in progress the French were not allowed to settle their own affairs themselves, but neighbouring Powers, forsooth, gathered their armies on her frontiers in order to determine what should be the Government and what should be the State of France. The consequence was a mixture of fear and cruelty, and there are no two human emotions which are more allied than fear and cruelty. The fear of these foreign Powers produced suspicion, distress, mutual hatred, and cruelty among nations and parties and friends. And so

these doubtful results came about in France. If you trace them back to their origin you will derive lessons most useful and most valuable to us all. You may bring the French history down a little lower. Now pray do not suppose I speak of the French lightly. The French are a very great nation, a very powerful nation, and a very progressive nation. I will tell you frankly my own belief. The French as a nation are exceedingly friendly to us and desire to be united with us in bonds of brotherhood. But as friendly critics you see what has gone on in France from one hundred years down to this hour. France has not been able to settle down upon one stable form of government. The very book which I have been referring to, which I was speaking of just now, very ably puts it, and contrasts the case of England with that of France. In England, which had no written Constitution, they had been working on their old Constitution altogether; but in France, he says, since the French Revolution, we have seen thirteen different Constitutions. All that is part, depend upon it, of the ancient misgovernment of France. It is a part of a special weakness flowing from its misgovernment for a long series of generations. By corrupt, cruel, and base action, the monarchs had effaced from the minds of the French people the true idea of law and public rights, and substituted for it that of arbitrary will and licence, and unlimited and vicious indulgence. These are the parents of all the difficulties in which France has found herself entangled. I rejoice to see that at the present moment there is an increasing tendency in France towards stability, and may God bless that tendency and promote it, and may France be enabled to discharge that high vocation in the world to which, with the great powers of her people and the great attainments of her history, I believe Providence has called her.

There are two other spaces of history which I would recommend to you. It often happens to me that I receive letters of inquiry from young persons, and older persons, too, as to what studies they should take up. The history of Ireland ought to be very well known to us, but, unfortunately, it is almost entirely unknown. I am not going to say a word upon controver-



sial subjects. I did not come here for that purpose. I have said, I think, some words upon those in other places, and I suppose I shall again. I am speaking to the historical student; that is the person I am now addressing, and I may tell him that in my opinion one series of historical developments from which he may derive the greatest benefit is the history of the Parliamentary institutions of Ireland during the last century. They are most remarkable for the great lessons they teach. The Irish Parliament in the last century was a Parliament with a hundred vices. In the first place, it was perfectly exclusive in the form of Protestants governing a Roman Catholic people. Next, it was a party of landlords, into which hardly anybody but landlords found their way, and its history is disfigured by much that is to be lamented; but it is a curious fact that, notwithstanding all that, there was in it a patriotic spirit; those men never lost the spirit of true patriotism. It is a spirit that atones for many vices. I rejoice to think that in this country, where we have plenty of faults—quite as many as our neighbours, though we are not quite so fond of dwelling upon them—the spirit of patriotism is strong upon us. The spirit of patriotism existed in Ireland during the last century, and I say deliberately to you that this miserable exclusive Parliament of Ireland, bad as it was, crammed full of rotten burghs, bad as it was in a score of respects, yet it worked out a purpose and design of freedom between 1700 and 1800 much greater than any work that was done by the English Parliament within the same period. If you look into the facts you will find them to be full of interest.

My last recommendation to the student is one I have been in the habit of making for the last fifty years, because I then adopted the sentiments upon which it is founded, and I now make it, therefore, with greater confidence after the lapse of fifty years. That recommendation is, to those who are able to carry it out, to study the history of the American Revolution. That is an extraordinary history. It is highly honourable to those who brought that revolution about; but also honourable in no insignificant degree to this country, because it was by this country that the seeds of freedom were sown in America, because it was

by imitating this country that America acquired the habits of freedom, and the capacity for more freedom.

In this country we have happily had, to a great extent, and I hope we shall have it still more, what is called local self-government—not merely one government at a central point, composed of parties, and exerting a vast power over their fellow-citizens, but a system under which the duties of government are distributed according to the capacities of the different divisions of the country, and the different classes of the people who perform them, in such a way that government should be practised, not only in the metropolis, but in every county, in every borough, over every district, and in every parish. And that has tended to bring home to the mind of every father of a family a sense of the public duty which he is called upon to perform. That has been the secret of the strength of America. The colonial system in which America was reared was in the main a free colonial system. You had in America these two things combined, the love of freedom and respect for law, and a desire for the maintenance of order; and where you find these two things combined, love of freedom together with respect for law, and the desire for order, you have the elements of national excellence and national greatness. I believe it is not extravagant to say that although there were but two millions of people in the thirteen American colonies at the time of the American Revolution, yet from among these two millions of people there proceeded at that epoch a group of statesmen who might defy the whole history of the world to surpass them, it might almost be said to compare with them, in any one country and at any one period of time. Such were the consequences of a well-regulated and truly masculine freedom. Now I am going to conclude. I have been speaking to you entirely, I may say, about that class of goods which are temporal goods. They are not the only goods; but it is not in my commission to lead you to higher things, or to determine the relative importance of the things seen which are temporal, and the things not seen which are eternal. I have had for a length of time a hand in the development through legislation of the economical powers and

resources of this country, but we should fall into a terrible snare and temptation were we ever to suppose that it is through wealth and worldly power that man can achieve happiness. The words are as true and solemn now as they were when they were spoken by One who was infallible, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" It is not for me to develop those ideas. I only wish that this occasion should not pass by without at least a single syllable to show that we are conscious of their existence and their importance.

And now I commend you again to your books. Books are delightful society. If you go into a room and find it full of books—and without even taking them down from their shelves—they seem to speak to you, to bid you welcome. They seem to tell you that they have got something inside their covers that will be good for you, and that they are willing and desirous to impart to you. Value them much. Endeavour to turn them to good account, and pray recollect this, that the education of the mind is not merely a stowage of goods in the mind. The mind of man, some people seem to think, is a storehouse that should be filled with a quantity of useful commodities which may be taken out like packets from a shop, and delivered and distributed according to the occasions of life. I will not say that this is not true, as far as it goes; but it goes a very little way, for commodities may be taken in and commodities may be given out, but the warehouse remains just the same as it was before, or probably a little worse. That ought not to be the case with a man's mind. No doubt you are to cull knowledge that is useful for the temporal purpose of life, but never forget that the purpose for which a man lives is the improvement of the man himself, so that he may go out of this world having, in his great sphere or his small one, done some little good to his fellow-creatures, and laboured a little to diminish the sin and the sorrow that are in the world. For his own growth and development a man should seek to acquire, to his full capacity, useful knowledge, in order to deal it out again according to the supreme purposes of education. I remember just now I said that, outside of

science, the chance for a labouring man to acquire knowledge was comparatively very little, unless he acquire it through observation. The poet Gray describes the condition of the rustics of the village in these words:—

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll ;  
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

We have witnessed an improvement upon that state of things. Knowledge has now begun to unroll her ample page, and chill penury does not now so universally repress. Let that improvement itself be improved upon, not necessarily by grand, imposing designs, but by each of us according to his means, with the sedulous endeavour to do our duty to our neighbour, and our service to our country. Let me express the fervent hope that this Literary Institute may thrive, and may largely and continuously contribute to the prosperity of Saltney and the happiness of its people.

# THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 3, 1890

On March 3rd, 1890, Mr Smith, the First Lord of the Treasury moved: "That Parliament having constituted a Special Commission to inquire into the charges and allegations made against certain Members of Parliament and other persons, and the Report of the Commissioners having been presented to Parliament, this House adopts the Report, and thanks the Commissioners for their just and impartial conduct in the matters referred to them, and orders that the said Report be entered in the Journals of this House."

Mr Gladstone moved an Amendment, which was defeated by 399 to 268. On February 11th preceding, Mr Gladstone had supported Sir William Harcourt's motion: "That the publication by the *Times*, on April 18th, 1887, of a forged letter attributed to Mr Parnell, and the comments thereon, were a breach of the privileges of the House of Commons." On March 25th Mr Gladstone spoke at the National Liberal Club on the same subject.

MR SPEAKER, I rise to move the amendment of which I have given notice. It is to leave out all the words after "House," in order to add the words—

"Deems it to be a duty to record its reprobation of the false charges of the gravest and most odious description, based on calumny and on forgery, which have been brought against members of this House, and particularly against Mr Parnell; and, while declaring its satisfaction at the exposure of these calumnies, this House expresses its regret for the wrong inflicted and the suffering and loss endured, through a protracted period, by reason of these acts of flagrant iniquity."

In the temperate speech of the right hon. gentleman<sup>1</sup> there are several passages which would invite remarks. I do not propose to dwell on them, though I might be tempted to ask what are those periods in the past when the application of honest principles gave, as he says, prosperity to Ireland? On one of his observations I wish to make a comment, and it is on the construction he has given to the amendment. He states that in

<sup>1</sup> Mr W. H. Smith.

the amendment, fairly construed, the language is such as to lead to the impression that everything noticed by the Commissioners, everything done by Irish members, receives the sanction of that amendment. Now, I should have thought it hardly possible for the right hon. gentleman to fall into such an error, because the reprobation which is recorded is directed to—

“The false charges of the gravest and most odious description, based on calumny and on forgery, which have been brought against members of this House.”

It is impossible that the right hon. gentleman can suppose that it is intended by the amendment to convey that all these assertions of censure which have been made by the Parliamentary Commission “are charges of the basest and most odious description, based on calumny and on forgery.” Consequently, I put it to the House that the right hon. gentleman’s construction of the amendment entirely falls to the ground. He is quite right in stating that the amendment bestows no censure upon the conduct of hon. members, and to that part of the subject, of course, it will be my duty to refer. The right hon. gentleman occupied the earlier part of his speech with a defence of the conduct of the Government. Now this subject, I must own, to me, as connected with the Opposition, is, in that point of view, a tempting one, but I will not follow the right hon. gentleman on this occasion. I desire to avoid on this occasion, for a reason which appears to me more than sufficient, all party recrimination. Tempting as the opportunity is, I entirely refuse it. For I ask myself, whose character and honour are at issue to-night, and will be principally affected by the vote the House is about to give? In some sense the three Judges are upon their trial; in some sense the Irish members of the Nationalist party are upon their trial; in some sense the Government may be upon its trial; but, sir, it is mainly the House that is upon its trial. It is the character of the House, which, when brought to the tribunal of history, no Parliament, as well as no party, can finally avoid; it is the character of the House which will suffer or gain according as on this occasion its course is wise and just, or according as it has

been led into setting a precedent in my opinion unworthy of its high honour, and highly dangerous as an example of future Parliaments.

There is one point which I will explain at once, for it is one on which I do not think there can be any quarrel on principle between the right hon. gentleman [and myself. He invites us to thank the Judges of the Commission "for their just and impartial conduct in the matters referred to them." It is not on account of a fundamental difference as to the conduct of the Commissioners that I have hesitated to embody these thanks in my amendment. It appears to me to be a questionable and hazardous proceeding to introduce into the course of our political action the practice of rendering formal thanks for the performance of judicial duty. I own that I have very considerable apprehensions on that subject. This House must necessarily be swayed from time to time by passion leading it in this direction or that. It has been our object to keep the action of the Judges separated by the widest possible interval from all our proceedings and from the temper and heat that here occasionally prevail. Here is an occasion in which all feelings have been stirred and roused from their depths, and in which the Judges have been called in to deal with a large portion of the subject matter, and I own I have very great doubts indeed as to the policy of rendering to them the formal thanks of the House. But I will not grudgingly render to the Judges what personally I can. An hon. friend of mine sitting behind me has expressed a desire to insert words in the amendment, "To acknowledge the zeal of the Commissioners in the discharge of the arduous duties imposed upon them." Well, I am ready to acknowledge their zeal, and I am ready to acknowledge more than their zeal. I acknowledge their ability, their assiduity and their perfect and absolute good faith. Though I may reserve to myself the right to criticise freely some of their statements, yet I do not think there is a line of that Report from beginning to end which has not been written by the Judges in absolute honour and good faith. And accordingly in what I may now say I beg it to be remembered that it is under the

reservation of what I have just said, and which I do not, in the slightest degree, desire to qualify. What I have said of the Judges I think I may have been able to say of many a speech I have heard delivered in this House. Such temper and disposition and such honour and good faith do not expel from the human mind and from human action all the effects of prepossession. In this Report, as I think, along with the amplest evidence of every quality I have described, there are defects and there are errors—

“Quas aut incuria fudit,  
Aut humana parum cavit natura.”<sup>1</sup>

I hope I have satisfied the House that I do not look in a grudging or unworthy spirit at the action and proceedings of the Judges, and accordingly if I claim, and it is a duty to claim—I am compelled by the action taken by the other side to claim—a liberty to criticise that Report, that will not imply any defect of fair and equitable intention towards those on whom we imposed a heavy burden, and who, I am bound to say, whatever view we may take of the political prepossessions—well, political sentiments, I will not even say prepossessions—with which they entered on the inquiry, have in every respect, I think, fulfilled the best and fullest expectations which we could possibly have entertained of them.

So much for the Judges; and now I come to the motion of the right hon gentleman. I will not dwell upon the serious addition that he proposes to make to the burden of the Journals of this House by inscribing upon them the 120 pages of this Report. I should have thought that if the House were to deal with this Report, it ought to have been presented to us not wholesale but in parts. As far as I know, that is the course which has been pursued upon former occasions—not upon occasions of Commissions like this, for, as the right hon. gentleman says, there has been no Commission like this before, and I hope there may never be again. When bodies acting by delegated powers, or by powers not supreme—for example, a Committee of this

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Art. Poetica*, v. 352



House—have made a Report, and when it has been intended to induce the House to adopt the Report, the regular and parliamentary course, I believe, has been to move that the Report be read, in order that it may be adopted freely and with full consideration of all its parts. But was there ever seriously made to a deliberative body such a proposal as is now made to us when we are asked, with reference to a document of 120 folio pages bristling throughout with contested and disputable matter, to accept it in the lump, and at once to pledge ourselves to every proposition it contains? If the purpose of the Government had been to secure our adhesion to the main propositions of the Report—namely, to the findings—the course was obvious and open for the right hon. gentleman to follow. He had only to propose that the findings should be adopted by the House, and undoubtedly then the decision of the House of Commons would have been taken upon a considerably narrowed issue. But I submit that the demand he now makes upon us, that we should adopt this Report of 120 pages, considering the multitude of varied propositions it contains, is alike contrary to the usage of Parliament in analogous cases, and, I must say, to the dictates of propriety and of common sense. If it is said that we are totally unable through a Select Committee to deal with a question of this kind, are we more fit to adopt the present course? Observe, that when the right hon. gentleman refused the repeated demand for reference to a Select Committee he stood in this position of advantage—that in acceding to it he would have had the unanimous assent of the House. The demand was the demand of the hon. gentleman the Member for **Cork**<sup>1</sup> and the whole of the Irish Nationalist party. It was thoroughly supported and approved by the Liberals on this side of the House. But the right hon. gentleman, with his extreme scrupulousness and tenderness for the position of the Irish Members, would not allow their case to be submitted to the consideration of a Select Committee, a political tribunal. If because of our political colour we are unable to investigate the facts, I want to know how we have acquired a better capacity for that

<sup>1</sup> Mr Parnell.

purpose now when we are called upon without examination, without inquiry, and without the slightest discrimination between any one proposition in the Report and another, to swallow the whole from beginning to end.

Now, sir, I will illustrate what I have said about some of the judgments in this Report in respect of which I find it necessary to reserve my liberty of criticism, and I will point out a few of the propositions to which hon. members are going to be invited to-night to append their subscription and approval. I say that this Report contains a number of opinions given upon issues which are in no sense and in no degree judicial. A serious question arose before the Commission, whether the agitation and the Land League were the causes of crime in Ireland, or whether it was due to other causes. Four other causes were brought before them as causes of crime, or causes of the cessation of that crime. The first was eviction and fear of eviction—I am now in 1879 and 1880. And I must offer this practical criticism upon the Report, that it is extremely unfortunate that in these findings generally there is no reference at all to period. We shall presently see that that is a matter of the most vital importance. The Commissioners say, on the top of page 86, that evictions and the fear of evictions were not the causes of crime; but on the bottom of the page they say that the increase of evictions and the result of the agitation against the landlords were contributory causes; consequently, it all comes back to the agitation. We are told that we have no right to look at evictions as having contributed to the increase of crime. They have of themselves, we are informed, induced to crime; but we must look to the causes of evictions, and the causes of the evictions are the causes of the increase of crime. This is an issue which is absolutely non-judicial. In what way can these three Judges, sitting ten years after the fact, have authority to determine with more weight and influence than any other man that evictions were not the cause of crime, or, if they were the cause, still that the evictions themselves were due to agitation? Observe, in that statement we are given to understand that in

the creation of those crimes in 1879-80, distress and extravagant rents had nothing to do with it. This opinion, so irrational in itself, we are called upon to adopt without question or correction. Then there is the statement that crime was due to secret societies. I will not criticise that conclusion, because I admit that the question as to whether there were secret societies or not is a question of fact which may fairly be called a judicial issue. Then we come to another issue, absolutely non-judicial, and yet we are called upon to declare to-night—every one of us—that the rejection by the House of Lords of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill in 1880, which was the remedy we sought to apply to the great difficulties of Ireland at that moment, had nothing to do with the increase of crime at all. I cannot conceive a more astounding assertion. It appears to me to be in defiance of all the first rules of common-sense and of every likelihood of the case. It may be said that the Irish ought to have met their distress more in the spirit of philosophers or angels, and to have drawn upon an unbounded stock of patience, and to have had unbounded faith in Parliament; but the Irish were men, and, according to the view of the Commissioners, they were men with a fair share of human imperfections; and to say that the provocation offered by the rejection of that Bill, which drew from Mr Forster<sup>1</sup> a most indignant denunciation—to say that it is not to be reckoned one of the causes of the increase of crime in Ireland, is indeed not a matter for censure, for no doubt it is an honest opinion on the part of the Judges; but it is an astounding proposition to submit to us in the year 1890, and to ask us to subscribe to. Then the Land legislation of this House is brought upon the carpet. It was alleged by some persons before the Commission that the Land legislation had been a great cause in mitigating the condition of Ireland and procuring the decrease of crime. Nothing of the sort, say the Commissioners. They say that the legislation of 1881 had no such effect, and they reject the proposition in like manner in respect to the Arrears Act of 1882, and say the suggestion that the Arrears Act tended to produce, and did produce, a diminution of crime is a suggestion.

<sup>1</sup> Then Chief Secretary for Ireland.

tion not well founded. That is a statement entirely untrue, in my opinion; but, whether true or untrue, it is a judgment upon an issue entirely non-judicial, and one which, in virtue of the authority we gave to the Judges, we ought not to be asked to subscribe to.

I will give one other instance, perhaps in one sense of a different description; but I will give an instance of what I think disproportionate and ill-balanced judgment. It will be for the Law Officers of the Crown to correct me, and contend that in this case the amount of censure has been justly apportioned to the amount of guilt. The Commissioners unearthed in the course of their inquiry the history of a miserable and obscure Irish paper called, I think, the *Irishman*—a paper so obscure that my noble friend Lord Spencer, whom no one will accuse of insufficient attention to Irish affairs and the duties of his office—Lord Spencer has said that he was not even aware of its existence. However, this paper has at length attained to fame through the labours of the Commission, and several pages of the Report are filled with extracts from it, and these extracts from the paper, with the concurrence of Archbishop Walsh,<sup>1</sup> are termed most abominable. I do not object—I do not complain; but what I ask is that you should be equally liberal in according blame to other things as abominable, when, as I think I can prove, these extracts from the *Irishman* were—I will not say pardonable at all, but insignificant from obscurity as compared with other things as abominable blazoned forth to the world. When we come to the grand and capital offence, the nature of which I will do my best to set forth to-night—when we come to that, there is not a word, there is not a citation of one of the aggravating circumstances; all that is given is a statement that the letter upon which a certain detestable charge was founded is a forgery. That I call an unbalanced judgment, a disproportionate assignment of blame. I did not wish to enter into minute criticisms of this kind; but you have forced me by compelling me, through your Motion, to become responsible for each and all of these assertions from beginning to end.

There is one other objection to adopting this Report which I

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop of Dublin.

will dwell upon by-and-by; but it appears to me to be so conclusive, so simple, that I own I do not understand in what way it is to be met on the other side, or how the Motion is to be justified. We have it on the declaration of the Judges themselves—a declaration they were justified in making, and bound to make—that great portions of the evidence, and what we know to be essential portions of the evidence, were entirely excluded from their view. They have arrived at these conclusions; they have recorded them; they have passed censure upon certain acts; but they have shut out from their consideration—as they have told us, and, moreover, in my opinion, they were justified from their position and point of view in shutting out from their consideration—essential portions of the evidence. What those essential portions were I will endeavour by-and-by to explain; but surely it is hard to believe the right hon. gentleman can maintain this contention, that a judgment has been passed upon the Irish case by a body of men who were precluded from looking at many of the most important topics that bear upon it. They have said that they were so precluded. But we are not precluded from looking at them—we are bound to look at them, we cannot do otherwise than include them. We are totally unfit for our office as politicians and as legislators unless we do include them, and give to each its due weight. How is it possible to so accept, on the authority of the Judges, the conclusions they make upon a portion of the evidence, when you are both able and bound to look at the whole evidence which the Judges were prohibited, by the nature of their Commission, from examining? These are, I think, conclusive reasons against adopting the Report *en bloc*, as has been suggested. The right hon. gentleman calls upon us to adopt this Report, but in what circumstances? It comes to us with the authority of the three Judges, who have most laboriously, zealously, and, so far, meritoriously, taken an enormous amount of evidence, upon which mass of evidence they have founded their conclusions; but you cannot separate the conclusion from the evidence on which it is founded. That evidence is not before us. There is not a man in this House

who has read it—he cannot; it is morally impossible; it is physically impossible. Is it decent? Is this what the right hon. gentleman describes as being the due conclusion of judicial procedure, if, when certain conclusions are adopted by other people and upon evidence, we are to adopt them wholesale, the evidence being out of our knowledge, out of the recollection probably even of those who heard it, and not having been heard by one in ten, or twenty, or fifty of those who are called upon to accept the conclusions?

Now, consider what is the sum of this great and important constitutional case. In my opinion it is this. There has been a controversy in which the Nationalist Members for Ireland were accused of two classes of offence. One of those classes was a class of infamous and dishonourable offences. The right hon. gentleman has expressed his joy and satisfaction, if I understood him rightly—and I should be sorry indeed if I did not—that justice has been done to the Members accused in respect of the personal charges. By that I apprehend he means those infamous and dishonourable offences. There was also another set of accusations of acts which were not in the nature of infamy or dishonour, but which were of a character which attach to all great and passionate popular movements and crises of agitation. On the first and great charge they have been acquitted, and our contention is that that acquittal, viewing the nature of the charges, absolutely demands notice from the House. The censure, as we contend, is not a subject for a Vote of Parliament at the present day and in present circumstances. Now, let us see what are the arguments which bear on those several propositions. Let me consider what are the points upon which the Nationalist Members of Ireland have been censured. I will endeavour to gather them into heads in a manner to which I do not think hon. gentlemen opposite will object. I bring them into three heads. I admit that I take no notice of two charges which do not fall under those heads. One is the charge that they disseminated newspapers tending to crime. That is the charge the formulation of which is said to imply the application of the high doctrine of

constructive conspiracy. Some of the agents of the League were found disseminating some of those newspapers, and consequently the sixty-five Members of Parliament who sit in this House, and who are not ashamed to belong to the League, are implicated. Yet the right hon. gentleman really thinks that it is the business of Parliament to adopt and make such a contention as that. There is another head which may be called the £6 case, or it may be called the £12 case—because in all there was £12 spent for the purpose of relieving persons who had been, or were supposed to have been, engaged in committing crime. I think a more trumpery charge to appear in a State indictment than this, standing as it does and supported as it is, it would be difficult to conceive. Now, the main charges are three; and I do not think there is any doubt about it. One is that seven of the respondents joined the Land League, with the ultimate view of separating Ireland from England. I here lament, as in many places I have to lament, that the Judges do not point out the time when this offence was committed. The time when this offence was committed was a time when desperate distress prevailed in Ireland, and when she was on the brink of famine; when unrighteous, unjust, and impossible rents largely prevailed in Ireland, as we know from subsequent experience of facts. It was in 1879 and 1880 that they joined the League with a view to the ultimate separation of Ireland from England. For my part, I rejoice to believe that the idea of the separation of Ireland from England—which, even in the worst circumstances, I think was both unreasonable and impossible—I rejoice to think that that idea is an idea which is now dead. If anything would tend to revive that idea it would be the vote which is now proposed to be given in condemning a portion of our fellow-members because they have given countenance to that idea. I am compelled by the love of truth to say that, in my opinion, to deny the moral authority of the Act of Union was for an Irishman no moral offence whatever. Yes, the hon. and learned gentleman may take me down.<sup>1</sup> I heard the Attorney-General cross-examine his witness from a pedestal, as he

<sup>1</sup> The Attorney-General (Sir Richard Webster) here made a note.

felt, of the greatest elevation, and endeavouring to press home the monstrous guilt of an Irishman who did not allow moral authority to the Act of Union. In my opinion the Englishman has far more cause to blush for the means by which the Act of Union was obtained than the Irishman has to blush for anything, even of excess or error, into which he may have been betrayed in his recollections of that Act of Union. It was, sir—and this I speak not in temper nor in heat, but after having done the best in my power for years past to learn the case—it was the offspring of tyranny, of massacre, of bribery, of fraud. It is no doubt a very serious responsibility to disturb a country that is under a Government procured by those means, because every man is responsible for the consequences of that disturbance; but to treat this as a great moral offence, and to come forward now in 1890, and in a sanctioning vote to condemn Irishmen because they held opinions in which it is highly probable, if not almost certain, that Grattan would have concurred had his life been prolonged, is a monstrous proposition.

I do not object at all to the recital of the Judges; they have made it in fair and temperate terms; but the adoption of this vote of censure by the House of Commons I object to in the strongest manner. I deem it not only unjust to the Members so designated—and who will suffer from it extremely little—but flagrantly absurd and unwise. The other two censures of the Judges are more to the purpose—I mean more to our purpose, more to the purpose of the present Motion. I think those two propositions sum up the assumed guilt of the Irish Members. First, they incited to intimidation by speeches, with knowledge that intimidation led to crime. I do not think that, as far as I can judge, that is an unfair statement of the case on that head against the Irish Members. I believe it is quite as much as the Judges themselves have stated. I think the citations of the right hon. gentleman were not entirely fair on the subject. I do not understand what was his object in citing from the charge of Lord Coleridge,<sup>1</sup> where he set forth

<sup>1</sup> The Lord Chief Justice, in the case of O'Donnell v. Walter, in 1868.



the nature of the accusations which have been made on the part of the *Times* as if he were favouring us with Lord Coleridge's opinion. Some one will, perhaps, kindly explain what in the world those have to do with the vote now before the House. But I would call the right hon. gentleman's attention to a passage on page 76 of the Report, where the Commissioners speak of the connection between agitation and crime. It is about fifteen lines from the bottom, and it runs as follows:—

“We may say at once that the charge that the respondents, by their speeches or otherwise, incited persons to the commission of murder, or that the Land League chiefs based their scheme on a system of assassination, has not been substantiated.”

But, in the opinion of the Judges, it was substantiated that the Nationalists incited to intimidation by speeches with knowledge that it led to crime. I am not in a position to say that intimidation did not produce crime. I contended and argued from that place<sup>1</sup> that it did, and I have seen no reason to reverse that opinion; but, again, I observe we are now speaking of what happened in 1880 and 1881. The proofs connecting those speeches with intimidation, and with intimidation which led to crime, belong to that period and do not belong to a later. The prosecutors in this case arrived at an arrangement with my hon. and learned friend<sup>2</sup> which I think excluded everything after 1885 or 1886 from that investigation. It was not worth their while to enter upon it; but we are now speaking of a former period. The hon. Member for Cork has himself frankly and ingenuously confessed and stated in this House his opinion that much had been done at that time in the way of boycotting which was questionable or improper, and I do not imagine that they deny the Judges' case in which they say intimidation led to crime. What was the other great charge? It was that the Nationalist Members never placed themselves on the side of law and justice; that they did not assist the administration; and did not denounce the party of physical force. I believe that I have

<sup>1</sup> The Treasury Bench.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Charles Russell, Q.C.

stated fairly the charges against the Nationalists as they have been given by the Commissioners. Let us see what follows.

In the first place, let me point out that these charges of continuing to encourage intimidation after its association with crime had become known, are charges perfectly general in their character. It is a question of the general prudence or imprudence, propriety or impropriety of the language that they used in its action upon the temper of an excited nation; it is not a question of having ministered to this crime or that; it is not a question of the slightest personal complicity with crime. There is not one here who will not share in the opinion held by Lord Spencer on the subject from the first: that personal complicity with crime was not charged against any one of the Members returned to this House. These charges are charges made by the Judges, and I am going to give you some weighty and conclusive reasons against voting in affirmation of them. In the first place, they are ten years old. It is a bad and a dangerous precedent to go back upon these long dates in order to obtain matter to hurl at the heads of political antagonists. In the second place, being ten years old—what happened at all happened in 1880, 1881, and 1882, chiefly in the two former years, 1880 and 1881—were the facts then unknown? Were these things done in a corner? Were they not the subject of incessant discussion and denunciation in this House? Is there anything now affirmed against the Irish Members by the Judges which was not affirmed by Mr Forster, and, in part, by myself and by others, at that time? If these things deserve condemnation now by a vote of this House, why did you not then condemn them? Well, I will tell you why. The Liberals of this House desired the matter to be fought out fairly in debate, and I do not think there was any reason or ground—not a rag of reason or ground—for a vote of Parliamentary condemnation. That was the Liberal idea; was the Tory idea more severe? Not at all. They thought that these men were good enough to associate with for political purposes. The practice was to arrange with them the votes and divisions, and at last, in 1885, how was the crisis of the Liberal Govern-

ment brought about except by the firm, steady co-operation of the Irish Members with the Tory party, for which I have never blamed them any more than I blame them now, because they thought that the interests of their country were superior to those of any British administration? Right hon. gentlemen opposite climbed to power upon the shoulders of the hon. gentleman the Member for Cork—upon the strong shoulders of the hon. Member for Cork, and they have now become a majority; and, having had full cognizance of his guilt upon the charges at the time—the charges not having been added to since—now in 1890 they actually rouse themselves to such a point of indignation that they are, forsooth, prepared to vote the condemnation of a cause and of a policy, the whole benefit of which they took at that period.

I am very sorry that I have been compelled, by the nature of this proposal, which left me no choice, to go into the discussion of polemical matters between the two sides of the House, but I am contending that it would be unwise, and, indeed, in the highest degree indecent, now in 1890 to pass this vote of censure, and I cannot give my own opinion of that without showing what was your own conduct during the preceding years, when the offences were committed. The right hon. gentleman read out the ninth finding of the Commissioners, and he seemed to be deeply impressed with the subject matter. What he said was indeed, in his characteristic way, put very mildly, but he felt he was setting forth matters of extreme gravity when he stated that the Irish took money for Parliamentary purposes from men promoting physical force in America—physical force which the Irish Members disapproved; but these men were willing to do what the Irish Members approved—namely, to subscribe money for Parliamentary purposes. If a parallel precedent were wanting to justify their conduct they have nothing to do but to point to you. You disapproved of the proceedings of the Irish in 1881 and the following years; you thought these proceedings led to crime and to mischief, but then the Irish were willing to join you in voting out the Liberal Government, and you took advantage of their good dispositions, notwithstanding their criminal and

unworthy deeds. *Mutatis mutandis*, this is a formula which will serve to express what the Judges have put into this Report.

I ask the House of Commons now to consider the counter-allegations which may be laid before them—allegations made seriously by the Irish Members. They hold the opinion that the agitation, even of 1879, 1880, 1881, prevented more crime than it caused. Crime was caused; what the Judges very properly call increased crime was caused by agitation. But I believe it to be a perfectly serious allegation, tendered in good faith by the Irish Members, that more crime and worse crime, more atrocious crime, was prevented by agitation. But what do you say to the allegation of the hon. gentleman the Member for Cork, who has told us from the first that his endeavour, his policy, his scheme has been to draw off agitation and popular action in Ireland from violence to Parliamentary methods? Now, for my own part, I do not hesitate to say that there was a time when I did not recognise that intention. And when was that time? This I shall say, as a matter of fact, that never at any period since the early part of 1882 have I charged the hon. gentleman the Member for Cork, as a minister or otherwise, with any action, any language, tending to the increase of crime in Ireland. I viewed him as a conservative force—I mean conservative in the sense of maintaining the law the order, and the peace of the country. And when the Irish Members tell me that in their conviction the agitation, even when it was of the roughest and wildest, stopped more crime than it caused, and especially when they tell me that the endeavour of their distinguished leader has been to put an end to violence and to substitute Parliamentary action for what Mr O'Connell used to call "the wild justice" of popular movements, I will not say that the House ought to vote in affirmation of that statement—that may be left to the historian to decide—but to vote that such a statement is unworthy of credit, and is without force or weight, is, in my opinion, a course not very well suited to maintain the dignity of the House. I ask the House to listen to the words in which the Judges describe the limited scope of the inquiry. I will

not quote the entire passage; it will be found on page 5 of the Report, but nearly at the close are these words—

“We must confine our researches to the question whether the respondents, or any of them, have been guilty of the things charged and alleged against them; we have no commission to consider whether the conduct of which they are accused can be palliated by the circumstances of the time, or whether it should be condoned in consideration of benefits alleged to have resulted from their actions.”

In the first place, I say this—I am not making it an accusation against the party opposite for their former conduct, but only against what they propose to-night—that condonation was given in the amplest, in the most solemn manner which is conceivable when, in 1885, the representative<sup>1</sup> in Ireland of Her Majesty's Government, with the knowledge and the sanction of the head of the Government, entered into close, private, confidential communications with the hon. gentleman the Member for Cork, the leader of the Irish party, for the purpose of devising, if possible, a scheme and a policy for the government of Ireland. I ask you to answer that argument, and to show me that the proceedings of Lord Carnarvon and Lord Salisbury—for he was an essential party to them, and it would not surprise me if I were to be authentically informed that no other Member of the Cabinet knew anything about it—I have my own suspicions, but I do not wish to act on suspicion alone—I ask you to show me that the action of the Viceroy and Lord Salisbury, who concurred with the Viceroy, in taking these gentlemen into their confidential counsel, for the purpose of devising a plan for the government of Ireland and its treatment in Parliament, was not a full, absolute, and ought to have been a final condonation and closing of the book of controversy with respect to former acts.

I want the House to consider a little what is the meaning of these remarkable words, “palliation and condonation.” Suppose this to be true—that there was some evil in the Irish agitation of 1880 and 1881, when, as I conceived at that time—erroneously or not—there was a policy which aimed at the destruction of agricultural rents. That charge I made at the time in good faith; but I am not quite

<sup>1</sup> Lord Carnarvon.

sure now whether it ought not to have been strongly qualified by the circumstances of the time. But supposing I am told that even then the good in the agitation far outweighed the evil, are you prepared to deny that? And here I have a sorrowful confession to make. Suppose I am told further that without the agitation Ireland would never have had the Land Act of 1881, are you prepared to deny that? Are you prepared to say that without the agitation Ireland would have got the Land Act of 1881? I hear no challenges upon that statement, for I think it is generally and deeply felt that without the agitation the Land Act of 1881 would not have been passed. I ask, what would have been the condition of Ireland at this moment—what horrors would have filled the interval—because you are now looking back on a period of comparative calm and tranquillity. I had a controversy with some of the Irish Members—particularly the hon. Member for Longford<sup>1</sup>—upon a point of difference. I always contended, and I now believe, that the abolition of the Irish Church and the Land Act of 1870 were the free gifts of the Imperial Legislature to Ireland. I do not admit that agitation had to do with the passing of either of these measures. I am not endeavouring to convince others. I am only reciting my own opinion. I was glad enough to claim credit for Parliament where I could for an impartial judgment in matters beneficial to Ireland. The abolition of the Irish Church was, in point of feeling and sentiment, a great sacrifice for Parliament to make, and, I think, a most honourable sacrifice, and the abolition of the Irish Church carried in its train the Land Act of 1870. At the time it was passed that Act was a great blessing to Ireland. It was highly favoured by the fortunate circumstances of good seasons, and for some years it seemed as if it might be a settlement of the Land Question. Then came the distress and misery of 1879, and it broke down. As the man responsible more than any other for the Act of 1881—as the man whose duty it was to consider that question day and night during nearly the whole of that Session—I must record my firm opinion that the Act

would not have become the law of the land if it had not been for the agitation with which Irish society was convulsed. You may say, that if it be true that a great law was necessary for the safety of Ireland—to save the people from misery and starvation—and if that Act could not have been passed without popular agitation, and if you are now going to pass censure on those concerned in that agitation, are you justified in saying, “I am precluded from looking at the beneficent results of their agitation”? The truth is this. This is our position. The Judges, under the necessities of the case, have looked at a part of the case. It is our duty to look at the whole.

What were the whole facts of that crisis? In the first place, terrible distress; in the second place, the rejection by the House of Lords of the legislative remedy<sup>1</sup> for the time proposed by the responsible Ministers of the Crown, and passed by a large majority in this House; in the third place, the growth of evictions; and, in the fourth place, the wide prevalence of iniquitous and impossible rents. Out of this great group of facts the Judges, acting under the terms of the Commission, absolving themselves, but not absolving us, have selected the agitation, and have said—We cannot look to the right or the left, or backwards or forwards; all we have to do is to return a verdict upon the dry facts whether we can allege that in some degree or other, and in some circumstances or other, there was a connection between the agitation and the increase of crime. But is Parliament to act upon such a basis? Are we to put out of view the facts I have referred to? Perhaps I shall be told that in the year 1881 I myself expressed my belief that the number of landlords levying iniquitous rents in Ireland was comparatively small. Yes; I did express that opinion, and I did it on the best evidence at my command. That was the evidence of the Commission,<sup>2</sup> at the head of which sat Lord Bessborough; and that Commission reported to that effect. But I cannot plead such ignorance now. Somewhere about 400,000 tenants in Ireland were empowered and enabled by the Land Act to

<sup>1</sup> The Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> Appointed in 1880.

seek judicial rents, or to make covenants with the landlords, which were themselves equivalent to judicial rents. And, in round numbers, 200,000 of them went into the Court or obtained these agreements, by which large reductions were secured. It is not possible for me now to deny that at that time excessive, iniquitous, and impossible rents prevailed widely in Ireland, and that they constituted a gigantic and capital fact in the whole Irish case of that period; and to pass judgment on that case without taking them into account is in itself a monstrous injustice. The fact is this. You are called upon now to weigh certain classes of actions and speeches in gold scales. They are the actions and speeches to which you can trace, as you think, injurious consequences. But all the other acts of far greater consequence, all the great historic force which determined the bringing about of the Irish crisis, and, as one may perhaps now say, the happy determination of that crisis, you are to set aside and say, "No, we have nothing to do with them." And yet you are not Judges in a limited Commission, but statesmen, politicians, and legislators, bound to look at the whole range of circumstances of the case, and guilty of misprision of justice if you fail so to do.

I can only show you my meaning in this matter by historical illustrations. My doctrine is this: These acts, with respect to which Irish Members have been censured, are not fit subjects for Parliamentary censure at all, because they are so mixed up with other circumstances that unless you take those circumstances into view you cannot possibly do justice; and when you have taken them into view, you find that the acts are such as are invariably incident to periods of national crisis, struggle, and revolution. Perhaps you think it wrong in me to apply the term revolution to any changes that have taken place, or are likely to take place, in Ireland. But remember who it was who connected revolution with Irish affairs. It was your own greatest authority—it was Lord Beaconsfield, as Mr Disraeli. In the year 1844, in one of the most remarkable, and perhaps, the wisest, passages<sup>1</sup> to which he ever gave utterance in Parlia-

<sup>1</sup> In a debate on The State of Ireland, Feb. 16, 1844.



ment, he pointed to Ireland, and told the Parliament of that day that the evil features of Ireland were such as could only be corrected in other countries by revolution, and that the duty of Parliament was to correct these evil features without revolution. Yes, that he said in 1844, and for 25 years after that declaration no single Act of importance was passed which in any way touched the conditions, fortunes, and prospects of the people of Ireland.

Well, now, sir, what are the circumstances? The circumstances are that, in the existence of this great necessity to relieve half the population from the pressure of impossible rents, means were adopted which were not ill intended and which were not purposely directed to crime or mischief, but which were capable in given circumstances of excitement in this case or in that, of operating on excited minds, and of being auxiliary causes of crime in such cases. These are the circumstances. But, sir, is it not the case that in all great movements in human affairs even the just cause is marked and spotted with much that is to be regretted? Have you ever heard of great changes brought about in the condition of a nation with nothing contrary to honour, nothing contrary to right, nothing contrary to order? Let me take the two charges against Irish Members—one of them that they gave no assistance to justice, and the other that they did not denounce the party of violence. I will take an illustration from our own history. Under Queen Elizabeth—and if ever there was a period of crisis in English History it was during that reign—the body of Roman Catholics of England were strictly and absolutely loyal. Of that there is no doubt, and it is recorded that the venerable Lord Montagu—I do not know whether he was entitled by years, as some others who have taken a share of public action, to be described as venerable—but, at any rate, the venerable Lord Montagu marched to Tilbury to support Queen Elizabeth with a troop of horse, commanded by himself, his son, and his grandson. Such was the loyalty of the body of Roman Catholics. At that time there was a handful or group of Roman Catholics, young Roman Catholics, chiefly in holy orders, emissaries of Rome, sustained

and cherished by the colleges abroad, and continually engaged either in arranging plots or awaiting outbreaks when they might have an opportunity of riveting upon this country a foreign domination, and possibly even of removing by assassination the Queen whose life was regarded by the mass of the people as an inestimable treasure. I have contrasted these two classes of persons—the one small and working against the law, the other as heartily attached to it. But who ever heard—I, for one, never heard—that those loyal Roman Catholics made it part of their active duty to detect the disloyal? They had no share in exposing them; and it is too much to demand, when you have got before you an oppressed nation and a system of law which you believe to be in the main radically unjust and bad and administered in a foreign spirit, hostile to the welfare and the feelings of the country—it is too much to expect every man as a test of loyalty, and as the only means of extending to him protection, to actively associate himself with the law and to make himself a portion of its train for the purpose of detecting those whom such a state of the law naturally alienates.

I take another case, and that is with regard to the fact that the agitation in the eyes of the Judges, and possibly in the opinion of many more, cannot be held to have been wholly dissociated with crime. I will illustrate that in like manner from our history. I will illustrate it from the history of the Long Parliament. Now, I suppose that if there is a body of men who have a secure place from generation to generation in the grateful veneration of the country, it is the leaders of the Long Parliament in its early years. I do not speak of the time of Cromwell, of Ireton, and of Lambert, although it has become a great fashion of late to worship Cromwell. It is the time of Pym and Hampden, of Falkland and Hyde, for the incidents which I am going to recite occurred within the last 12 or 14 months of the Long Parliament. Falkland and Hyde themselves in the Long Parliament belonged to the Opposition. I will not quote the passage from Hallam, where he gives a general description of it, but I will quote cases of what was done by those great champions of law and order who now enjoy our gratitude and veneration.

I take them from Mr Hallam, except in one case, which I take from the notes of Sir John Northcote, a very worthy and distinguished ancestor of Lord Iddesleigh. The Long Parliament usurped from the first, Hallam says, legislative, executive, and judicial functions. There was a Judge whom they did not like, who was considered to be subservient to prerogative. They sent the Usher of the Black Rod into the Court of King's Bench, and they seized Judge Berkeley while the Court was sitting. They required the Judges who had signed the warrants for ship-money to enter into heavy recognisances of many thousands of pounds; whether they had been students of the Act of Edward III.<sup>1</sup> or not, I do not know. When they heard of a clergyman who had performed any ceremony in the Church that they disliked they sent and seized him and committed him to prison as a delinquent. There was a tailor so imprudent as to curse the Parliament. He was sent to labour in Bridewell for life, not by the House of Commons, but by the House of Lords, so that a congenial spirit prevailed in both branches of the Legislature. Well, sir, when petitioners petitioned in the most orderly manner for the preservation of the Constitution they were sent for and imprisoned, but when tumultuous crowds brought petitions for a change they were welcomed to the Bar of the House. The climax of all these cases was one which I hope, sir, will never be repeated during the period of your own experience. This happened on the 10th of December 1641. A Member of Parliament, Sir William Earle, gave information of some dangerous words that had been spoken. Dangerous words! That is the statement of the charge. What was voted?

“That Mr Speaker should issue his warrant to apprehend such persons as Sir William Earle shall point out.”

Such, sir, was the admixture of gross and human elements in the popular movement upon which, notwithstanding, we look back as one of the most beneficial and most glorious, at any rate in these early stages, in the whole course of our history. And

<sup>1</sup> The Government had recently put in force a long disused Act of Edward III., against Nationalists in Ireland.

we have been accustomed, many of us, to toast at our festive gatherings, "the cause for which Hampden bled in the field, and Sidney on the scaffold." Very probably some of those who vote with the right hon. gentleman to-night have toasted this cause for which Hampden bled in the field, and Sidney on the scaffold. These deliberate, flagrant, constant, wilful, and systematic violations of law and of private right which were thus perpetrated by those great men, and, on the whole, good men, are far graver and far fitter to be put into an indictment than the indirect consequential responsibilities that you throw upon some of the Irish Members, whose motives and whose intentions the Judges themselves have been the first to acknowledge. Perhaps I may be allowed, for it conveniently sums up the whole case, to quote the words ascribed to Lord Chatham. I believe they are not in his speeches; they rest upon the authority of Mr Grattan. Lord Chatham spoke of that very time which I have been describing. He said—

"There was ambition, there was sedition, there was violence, but no man shall persuade me that it was not the cause of liberty on one side, and of tyranny on the other."

The cause which was marked by sedition and violence was—in the judgment of Lord Chatham, who stands at the head, perhaps, of your orators and statesmen—the cause of liberty; and the cause opposed to them, which no doubt had its catchwords of "law and order," was, in his judgment, the cause, not of liberty, nor law and order, which are the sisters and essential allies of liberty, but the cause of tyranny. For these reasons I say that in my opinion you must raise yourselves a little above the level of the day, and, if you can, endeavour to take the view of the transaction we are now engaged in, that the historian will take when he comes to perform his final office; and you will see that these matters—though I will not say the conduct of the Irish Members is free from censure any more than I will venture to say that my own conduct is free from censure, or the conduct of better than I—are not fit subjects for a Parliamentary vote. And that Parliamentary vote, the vote of an adverse, antagonistic majority, delivering itself, in consonance with its own views to

crush or discredit political opponents, while adding nothing whatever to the weight of the judgment of the Commissioners, will, on the contrary, tend to deprive it of such weight.

I will now refer briefly to the acts which constitute the acquittal. I allude to the charges, every one of which would have personally stigmatised and personally disgraced all the men who were the objects of them had these charges been true. I do not think you could ever have made arrangements with these men to conduct along with them the opposition to a Liberal Government. I do not think that in 1885 you would have entered into confidential communications with them for the purpose of arranging informally a scheme for governing Ireland. What are these charges? I take them in their latest edition. There are many editions, and the last edition is the least violent, and, I was going to say, the least atrocious. They were charged with having given incitement by speeches to a scheme of assassination carefully calculated and coolly applied; with having given payment to promote murder; with having entered into personal association with criminals; and with having made payments to aid escape from justice. I do not think the right hon. gentleman has observed that the Commissioners expressly absolved the Members from this personal association with notorious criminals. Then it was charged that they gave countenance to a murderous association in America, but it was proved that they gave it no other countenance than that which I have described; it was charged that they, in the person of their chief, were intimate with the leading Invincibles, and had probable knowledge of what they were about in the beginning of May. And lastly, sir, there come the forged letters. These are the charges of an infamous character from which there has been a full acquittal, and we ask you to give effect to that acquittal.

Now, I have spoken thus far of the Irish Members without distinction. I must now speak of the chief among them, because he was the object of by far the worst and most atrocious of these charges. I must speak of Mr Parnell. I believe that the charge brought against him was not only an atrocious charge, but that it was in itself a charge of atrocity

entirely unexampled in our history. Had that charge been true, the hon. Member for Cork would have been guilty, morally guilty, as an assassin, as a coward, as a liar, and as a hypocrite. Every one of those crimes, the worst and the basest that can be charged to a human being, would lie at the door of the hon. Member for Cork had he been guilty. Such was the charge in itself. If it were true, it was the more needful that it should be made. On whom was it made? It was made on a man who, looked upon in his public career, was charged with the leadership of a people. He was charged from day to day with the daily care of a nation's interest, at a time when he was invited to become virtually a defendant in a Court of Justice that sat for a year and a half. Such was his condition in public. What was his condition privately and personally? The hon. gentleman was well known to be strong in mind as he was weak in health. He was known to be a man of broken health at the time this charge was made, and finally—there is no indelicacy in alluding to it, because the hon. gentleman himself has modestly and becomingly spoken of it—he was known to be a man whose lot has not been cast among the rich men either of England or of Ireland. When this charge was brought, under enormous responsibility, what was the assurance that accompanied it? It was not cast at random before the country; it was cast with a solemn assurance that imposed even upon Members of this House, in these terms, that, "after the most careful and minute scrutiny [the letter] is, we are satisfied, quite authentic."<sup>1</sup> Was there a scrutiny? Was there a scrutiny at all? Was there anything careful and minute about it? Yes, sir; there was something careful about it, and that was a carefulness not to know. Mr Macdonald<sup>2</sup> went into the box, appeared upon his oath, not closed up within the curtains of the office of the *Times* newspaper, but upon his oath personally in the face of day; and what said Mr Macdonald? "I abstained from asking Mr Houston why the envelopes were wanting, and from whom he got the letters;" and then, "I particularly avoided the

<sup>1</sup> The *Times*, April 18, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> The Manager of the *Times*, who gave evidence before the Commission.

subject of origin." Having ventured upon forgery, having carried calumny to its climax, the whole of this was crowned with falsehood, divulged in the most solemn form, and given to the credulous, those whom party prejudice for a moment might mislead, to assure them that they would tread in the paths, not of cruelty and tyranny, but of justice. Sir, is it an immoderate demand that, after an occurrence like this, after a poisoned weapon has been aimed, aimed under such circumstances, aimed at such a person, and aimed with the solemn assurance that nothing was so dear to those who launched it as the strict observance of the law—is it too much that I should ask the House of Commons, which—by implication and involuntarily, at least—came to give much countenance to the exterior part of this case—is it too much to ask that we should record our judgment upon this unexampled occurrence?

I have not been able, I admit, to abstain altogether from reference to the conduct of the Party opposite in former years. I have made no charge against the conduct of the party, or the conduct of the Government, in immediate connection with this matter. I wish to do nothing to give an excuse to prejudice or to prepossession. And now, sir, as a member of the minority, to whom am I to appeal? I appeal from the Party opposite to the Party opposite. I appeal from them as a Party to them as individuals. I ask you as citizens—I will not say as Christians—and as men to consider this case. I ask you to acknowledge the law of equal and reciprocal moral obligation; I ask you to place yourselves for a moment—not the mass among whom responsibility is diffused and severed till it becomes inoperative and worthless; but I ask you individually, man by man, to place yourselves—in the position of the hon. Member for Cork as the victim of this frightful outrage. Is it possible, in doing this, after all his cares, all his suffering, all that he has gone through—and I believe there is no parallel to it at least for 200 years—that you can fail to feel that something remains due to him, or that you can bring that something lower or make it smaller than I have put it in the Amendment I am about to move? No, sir. Then

give what I pray you to give; give it as men, but do not be satisfied with giving a judgment that may be sustained by the cheers of a majority of this House upon a victorious or favourable division; give such a judgment as will bear the scrutiny of the heart and of the conscience of every man when he takes himself to his chamber and is still. Of such a judgment I have no fear. For such a judgment I ask you, I entreat you, I urge you, I might almost say, in the name of that law of reciprocal obligation, I respectfully demand it of you. Give such a judgment in the terms of the Amendment, concur in declaring that which is, after all, but a part, and a feebly drawn and represented part, of the wrongs that have been inflicted—give that judgment, accede to our demand, accede to our prayer, and grant this late, this measured, this perhaps scanty reparation of an enormous and unheard of wrong.



# THE LAND PURCHASE BILL

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 24, 1890

Upon the motion to read the Government measure known as the Land Purchase Bill for Ireland a second time, Mr Parnell moved its rejection, and was supported by Mr Gladstone. The Bill was read a second time by 348 to 267. Mr Gladstone also spoke on its introduction on March 24. When the Bill was reintroduced in the following winter session, Mr Gladstone spoke against the second reading (December 2), and returned to the subject on April 10, 1891.

I WISH, in the first place, to make my acknowledgments to the courtesy of my hon. friend the Member for Cavan<sup>1</sup> in having allowed me to take this early opportunity of making known my views on this important question. Sir, it is with very mixed sentiments that I rise to express my opinion—mixed in this manner: that I deeply regret to find myself compelled to oppose a Bill which it would have given me far greater satisfaction to support, had I not been driven by overwhelming conviction to offer opposition to it. I had hoped, and entertained a lively hope, that it might be possible for us on this side of the House to give support to the plan of the Government. I was encouraged in that hope by the remarkable declaration of Lord Salisbury, about which, as a matter of fact, I believe there is no question, that the plan of the Government was not intended to impose any burden on the British taxpayer. According to Parliamentary and invariable usage, there can be only one meaning assigned to these words. They are totally incompatible with any intention to propose a heavy engagement of the public credit. They were so understood universally, and by myself amongst others. It would have been a very great advantage on many grounds, if it had been possible for us to see the land question in Ireland, in familiar phrase, “got

<sup>1</sup> Mr Knox.

out of the way." Every such question, however there may be involved in it principles of justice and right as against oppression, yet likewise tends to stir up the turbid elements of society, and those who have no good cause for making demands on the landlord can often bring forward a claim in such circumstances, under cover of those who have such a cause. It is very well that the country should have seen brought finally to issue the question whether—as is often alleged, and, as I think, believed, on the opposite side of the House—the land question is the only question in Ireland, and the demand for national self-government merely an appendage to that question. It would have been most satisfactory to me, and I believe to others who think that national self-government ought to be granted to Ireland for Irish affairs, to have seen that important point relieved from all possibility of doubt and dispute by some satisfactory legislation with regard to Irish land.

With regard to this Bill, the Chief Secretary,<sup>1</sup> who in his speech repeated the assurance that no burden was to be placed on the taxpayer, must have seen from the reception of those words in what sense they were understood by the House. My first disappointment as to the Bill was when he proceeded to inform us what was the real meaning of the words—that the credit of the country was to be pledged to the extent of £33,000,000 for the sake of carrying through the provisions of the Bill. I should not, sir, have been deterred from supporting this Bill by the argument offered by the hon. Member for Cork,<sup>2</sup> though I admit there is great force in it. He said, and I think with truth, that we cannot, with perfect satisfaction, approach the settlement of a question of this kind as long as Ireland is under the present Coercion Laws, because the effect of those laws is to disable the weaker portion of the Irish tenantry from prosecuting their aims by peaceable and lawful means, and by what were lawful means, and by what would be lawful means in England or Scotland, from entering into a combination, which is a legitimate weapon in

<sup>1</sup> Mr A. J. Balfour.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Parnell.

their hands, for determining the just amount of rent they ought to pay. Still, I was quite prepared to enter upon the consideration of this question on the introduction of the Bill. I endeavoured to do justice to the pains bestowed upon it, to the ingenuity which it displays, and in no respect do I retract what I said upon that occasion. I waited to examine the Bill, still cherishing what hope I could; but I am sorry to say that examination has brought upon me my second and my greater disappointment.

One word I must say with respect to the alternative plan which has been proposed by the hon. Member for Cork. I think his conduct in making that proposal was not only honourable, but even chivalrous, because he appeared to admit that a person who is in opposition may fairly be called upon by the Government, if he objects to a measure of the Government, to propose an alternative measure of his own. That is a principle, I think, new to this House. The hon. Member accepted it at the same time without hesitation. Now, sir, it would not be possible to discuss in detail the plan of the hon. Member, and I am not certain that in all its details I have a perfect comprehension of it. I have no doubt it was my own fault; but the statement was a very brief one, and while the general purpose was clear, the exact terms are not, certainly, fully in my mind. But on two points I wish to do justice to the plan. In the first place, it was comprehensive; it was intended to effect a settlement of the whole question. In another point I strongly sympathise with the hon. Member for Cork. One object of his plan was not to expatriate the Irish landlords, but to retain them in Ireland; and I, for my part, am of opinion that though the expatriation of the Irish landlords may be a less evil than many others—for instance, than a continuance of the land system as it once was—would have been, yet I own that I think it would be a sorry conclusion to their long career if, upon the establishment of a free Government and of free institutions in their country, they were to decline to take that part in the adjustment of the affairs of Ireland which their station entails upon them as

a high and absolute duty. I am glad to observe that the right hon. gentleman the Attorney-General<sup>1</sup> for Ireland, as I understood, in no way took exception to this principle of the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork, and I think a well-known Irish County Court Judge, Mr O'Connor Morris—a gentleman who, though an excellent public officer, is known to be a supporter of hon. gentlemen opposite in regard to Home Rule for Ireland—has propounded a plan based on the same ideas. I do trust that we may have full opportunity for the consideration of such features of the plan as would tend to the retention of Irish landlords in Ireland, as well as to the adjustment of the land question.

I am sorry to say that, partly perhaps owing to my own fault, I did not fully gather from the speech of the right hon. gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland in introducing this Bill its real character in regard to several important points. I shall go over very rapidly the objections to various points which appear to me capable of being dealt with in Committee, and I shall avoid the inconvenience of entering unduly, in a Second Reading speech, into details which can be dealt with in Committee. Over this class of objections I shall run rapidly, though some of them are so serious in themselves as possibly to constitute valid objections to the Second Reading of the Bill. The first objection is one on which probably there may be a disposition on the part of Her Majesty's Government to come to an agreement. I think this Bill ought to be confined to landlords who are already such. It would be highly improper to encourage persons to become buyers of land with a view to taking advantage of the enormous boon which is being offered. I shall not dwell on this point, because I hope it may not be a subject of dispute between us. Next, there is the question of arrears. I shall not dwell on this point at length after the speech of the right hon. gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division;<sup>2</sup> but any one who heard the right hon. gentleman's remarks in regard to the proposal to allow two years' arrears to be calculated

<sup>1</sup> Mr Madden, member for the University of Dublin.

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Trevelyan.

in the purchase money must, I think, admit that the proposal stands in need of justification, which possibly may be forthcoming. There is very great force in the objection of the hon. Member for Cork in respect to the treatment of tenants of non-selling landlords. That difficulty in the present Bill has been raised to a maximum. It may be said this applied to the proposal of 1886, and it is true that it did apply but in a very mitigated degree, because in the Bill of 1886 we proceeded to take a very large portion of the boon to be conveyed by Parliament, not for the benefit of tenants as tenants, but as a benefit for the whole community in Ireland. No less than 18 per cent. was proposed, not to go directly to the tenants, but to the benefit of Ireland, though, of course, it indirectly would have gone to the tenants in some degree, inasmuch as tenants form a large proportion of the population. Well, I own I think it is a very great objection, indeed, that the benefits proposed by the Bill are given to the two classes of landlords and tenants, and I must say in no degree to the nation. With the exception of a very limited proposal in regard to labourers, and while Ireland as a whole will have her credit pledged, and while the credit of Great Britain is pledged, Ireland as a whole is to receive no portion of this enormous advantage. There is another point which appears to me to be impossible to be defended, and which, indeed, goes so near the root of the Bill as to cause me almost to doubt whether it can be dealt with in Committee. I refer to the method for ascertaining the net rental of the land. The standard laid down in the Bill appears to me to be so bad that it would enable a landlord to obtain compensation in respect of a large part of income that he had never received, and never had it in his power to appropriate to his own benefit and advantage. No reduction is provided to be made for expenses of management, or for law charges—as, for instance, in regard to evictions—or bad debts. Under the Bill the landlord is to be compensated even for bad debts, which have had to be written off, and which are absolutely beyond recovery. I need not say the effect of this is that, when you

think you are giving 17 years' purchase, you may be giving 20 or 22 years'. I think these are all elements that ought to be considered in arriving at the real rent. Next, I take the strongest possible objection to our placing an embargo on the local funds of the counties of Ireland. That appears to me to involve a principle which this House ought to hold sacred, and from which it ought never to depart. I am now on a point upon which I stand, perhaps, in need of some information. As I understand the Bill, there is nothing to prevent the occupier who becomes an owner under this measure from himself becoming a landlord.

Mr MADDEN—He cannot sub-let without the permission of the Land Commission.

Mr GLADSTONE—Cannot sub-let? Cannot let at all?

Mr MADDEN—He can sell, but he cannot sub-divide or sub-let.

Mr GLADSTONE—Cannot get an occupier under him?

Mr MADDEN—Hear, hear!

Mr GLADSTONE—But upon what principle is the Land Commission to proceed in granting or refusing such permission? This is a very important point. Is it to be understood as an universal principle of the Bill, that every man who buys, buys under a legal obligation to occupy? It is a question of great importance, upon which there ought to be a clear understanding, which no doubt we shall obtain at the proper time. Now, with regard to the guarantees that the right hon. gentleman has ingeniously provided, I will not, at the present time, undertake to make a minute examination of them. The really valuable part—indeed, I may say the only valuable part—of those guarantees is to be found in the grants to be made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on account of Probate Duty and other public charges. But we have already given to England and Scotland corresponding grants, free from any lien whatever. How is it possible, if we make a free gift of these grants in England and Scotland, and place them unfettered at the disposal of the Local Authorities—how is it possible for us to say that the grants in the case of Ireland should have this embargo

placed upon them, not even for the benefit of each county at large, but for the benefit of certain individuals in each county? There have been at various times violations of the principle of equality as applied to different parts of the three kingdoms; but I am not aware that we have ever known a more glaring departure from that principle. Another point which I must also mention, though it is one that can be dealt with in Committee, relates to the charges which it is proposed to impose on the counties for the salaries of the Land Commission and the composition of that Commission. These are a very grave assemblage of points, on which, however, I feel that it is not desirable to dwell at length at this moment, as I do not wish to prolong the remarks I have to make, and as there will be an opportunity for the future discussion of them.

I come now to objections of which I must frankly own that each and all of them appear to constitute an absolute reason against the Second Reading of this Bill. I have already expressed my desire to discuss this question apart from considerations of party. I will endeavour to adhere to the principle of that declaration. I will not remind any hon. Member of this House of what it might be inconvenient for him to recollect. I will not remind him intentionally of any portion of the conduct of the Government. It is enough for me to endeavour to look at their propositions as a matter of business, and not as a matter of party; and to endeavour in that sense, and in that light, to place their character before the country. When this Bill was introduced, I had no reason to know from any communication, direct or indirect, what view would be taken of it by the representatives of Ireland—whether the £33,000,000 held out would operate as a golden attraction for the purpose of placing in abeyance any objections which they might feel inclined to entertain. I did not say one single word in the course of the remarks which I then made which tended or were meant in any degree to predispose unfavourably the mind of any single person in this House. But, sir, it became obvious at once that Ireland was opposed to this Bill. I have seen an account of a meeting of Irish landlords, whose position

under the Bill it will be our duty closely to examine and carefully to exhibit; but I cannot say that I consider them as having, in reference to this matter, even the smallest title to express the voice of Ireland. For the voice of Ireland I must look to two quarters. I must look, in the first place, to the Members for Ireland, and I suppose that I am quite right in saying that five-sixths of those Members are deliberately and determinedly opposed to this Bill. But this present House is perfectly familiar with the idea of passing Irish Bills in defiance of the wishes of the Irish Members. And, therefore, I never should dream of addressing to this House such an argument—however operative in my own mind—it would be idle to address to this House of Commons such an argument, as that in legislating for Ireland the opinions of the Irish Members should be considered. The contrary practice is recorded in the transactions of the House during the four years in which the present Parliament has sat. But this case is altogether peculiar. You are going to make Ireland a debtor; you are going to constitute a debt of which I have not the smallest doubt that in perfect good faith it is your intention to rigidly exact repayment. But if that is your intention and plan, it is a matter of vital importance to consider what, in the conclusion of this transaction, is the attitude of the person who is about to be made subject to the debt. That person has but two means of speaking. The first, the greatest and the most constitutional, is by the Members; and if the great bulk of these Members protest against the constitution of this debt—if they decline to recognise it as an obligation—if, on the contrary, they treat the provisions of the measure as a new wrong inflicted on Ireland—I say nothing now as to the correctness or incorrectness of their opinions; I am simply stating the facts, and my proposition is that if you are going to make the people of Ireland your debtor for a sum of about £35,000,000—which, if the Bill be read aright, is a figure which may rise very much higher—it is a most formidable combination of circumstances under which you, by your own choice, involve Ireland in that pecuniary obliga-



tion, she protesting all the time, and declining to admit that she is getting value for her money.

To illustrate that question I would make an appeal to Her Majesty's Government. Do they think it would be possible, within the widest limits of the widest definition of Parliamentary omnipotence, to enact a law for Scotland which should contain a concession of Imperial credit to the extent of £33,000,000 for the benefit of certain classes in Scotland, and to impose the repayment of that money, in case of default, upon the counties of Scotland, in defiance of the protest of sixty out of the seventy-two Scotch Members? If a Member of the Government does me the honour to follow me in this debate, I beg him to answer that question. Would he be prepared so to legislate for Scotland, contemplating with perfect good faith the benefit of certain classes in Scotland, and then, by reason of a thing done for the advantage of these classes, imposing upon the counties of Scotland and upon all persons and interests in those counties—though nine-tenths may not have derived a farthing of benefit under the Act—this liability upon them, in defiance of their protest? There is important auxiliary evidence—the evidence of the counties themselves. Is there a single county in Ireland, is there a single elective body in Ireland, which has said one word in favour of the measure? Their credit is about to be interfered with and appropriated by us for purposes of which they do not approve, and I do not hesitate to say that even had I doubts—which I do not entertain—upon the provisions of this Bill, which I shall presently refer to, I should deem it most unconstitutional, most impolitic, to force such a measure upon Ireland in defiance of her own deliberate and overwhelming objection.

My second objection is to the use of British credit in this case. I have never been one of those who take an extreme view on the subject of the use of British credit. But I think it is a very grave matter indeed, even when the security taken for the repayment of the money advanced is, in my own judgment at least, an absolute security. I cannot deny that any large use of British credit is a burden upon the country. I

should think I was tampering with words, and what is called "throwing dust in the eyes" of those whom I address, if I denied that for a moment. It is quite clear that every large use of British credit diminishes your power of using it in other directions; and how am I to be told, if that is the case—and I believe it to be utterly undeniable—that it is no burden on the people? I do not wish to push this too far. It may be quite right to impose burdens upon the country with the assent of the country and for an adequate object and with ample security. I shall, therefore, avoid any abstract declaration on this subject, but I shall refer to the circumstances in which we stand, and I do not hesitate to say that it appears to me that this Parliament is both in honour and in policy, and upon the clearest constitutional ground, precluded from a large application of British credit for the purchase of land in Ireland. Remember, if ever there was a question decided at a General Election, this question was decided at the General Election of 1886. About the voice of the party opposite upon it there could not be the slightest doubt. I am not going to make the smallest invidious reference to the benefit which they derived, to the victories which they obtained, through exhibiting the tremendous burden which was to be imposed upon the country by the Land Bill of 1886. And with regard to this subject of the burden upon the country, I must remind the House, it is in all our recollections, that the universal representation was that £100,000,000, £150,000,000, or £200,000,000 were to be exacted from the British taxpayer for the purchasing the estates of the Irish landlords. That was the case with regard to the party opposite. It was still more the case with those who still do us the honour of interspersing themselves among us.<sup>1</sup> I think, generally speaking, that they went further and took a more extreme view than the Tories took with respect to this question of the use of British credit for the purchase of Irish estates. I must go further still; I must admit that a very large number of Liberal candidates at the Election declared their opposition to purchase

<sup>1</sup> The "Dissentient Liberals" or "Liberal Unionists" who, as a party, sat on the Liberal benches.

on that basis, and I believe that a still larger number of Liberal constituencies entertained that objection. I do not now enter into the question whether that is a final judgment or not. A judgment may be pronounced very clearly at one General Election, and it may be reversed by another General Election, and I am not at all sure whether this subject of Imperial credit may not possibly add another to the many examples of the truth to which I have just reverted. I am not at all sure whether we ourselves—each of us as individuals—are perfectly capable of giving a final judgment on this question of British credit until we have considered more largely than we have yet done, and until we have obtained more thorough and authoritative information than we yet possess upon the old relations of England and Ireland with respect to finance as they stood at the period of the Union, and with reference to all the expenditure which has been thrown upon Ireland by the Union. But I do say that for this present Parliament, if British credit ever were to be used for the purpose of purchasing those estates, it ought to be under a system of guarantees, I am bound to say, very different indeed from those which are provided in the present case. I do not think that the present Parliament—if there be such a thing as an honourable understanding with the nation—is in a position to adopt the proposals of Her Majesty's Government for setting aside a vast sum of money, and by means of a circulating fund, and therefore with an interminable operation—I do not think that the present Parliament is in a position to take such a step and give such a vote in conformity with our honourable obligations to our constituents. These two objections—the Irish opposition and the use of Imperial credit under the circumstances in which we stand—constitute a conclusive reason why we should not permit the Bill to be read a second time.

I now come to the third objection, which, in my judgment, is more formidable still, and that is the question of State landlordism. The economical test the right hon. gentleman<sup>1</sup> has ingeniously covered with a triple front of brass in his

<sup>1</sup> Mr A. J. Balfour.

three impossibilities.<sup>1</sup> I am afraid that those impossibilities would all be penetrated by pecuniary necessity, as the spears of great warriors used in ancient times to go through the many folds with which shields were covered. I own I do not think the results of present repayments<sup>2</sup> are altogether satisfactory. About 2½ per cent. is the deficit upon the repayment of advances which have been made upon such a scale as evidently not very greatly to compromise the power of the State or to entail any particular danger. The payments under the Acts we have passed up to the present time are 2·4 per cent. in arrears. I do not think that is a brilliant result, when you consider that it is the outcome of measures which involved an enormous pecuniary boon, manufactured out of British credit, to the persons who have directed the sales and purchases in Ireland. It is when from hundreds you come to deal with thousands, and go from thousands to tens of thousands, and from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands, that the mere question of pecuniary risk assumes a totally different aspect.

The occurrence of seasons of famine will entail difficulties of which we are not at all competent to measure the extent; but the political danger is, in my opinion, tenfold greater than the economical. I think I may say that nothing will induce me, in a Bill of this kind, on a large scale to incur the political danger of State landlordism in Ireland. It is terrible to contemplate. I suppose that the right hon. gentleman does not think of coming upon the ratepayers of the country or upon the recipients of the Probate Duty Fund until every measure has been taken against a defaulting occupier; for I assume that the very first thing to be done in the case of default is, in the name of the English Treasury, to evict the Irish tenants, with the help of the constabulary, the soldiery, and the battering-ram, with no aid wanting except that of the emergency man, whom, I presume, the State will not have occasion to employ. I am not willing to be a party to such operations conducted in our name. In a most

<sup>1</sup> See *Hansard*, March 24, 1890, col. 1712.

<sup>2</sup> Under the Irish Church Act (1869), the Land Acts of 1870 and 1881, and especially the Ashbourne Acts of 1885 and 1888.

able pamphlet just published by an hon. Member who promises to be a very considerable addition to our ranks, judging from the argumentative power he shows—I mean the hon. Member for Elgin and Nairn<sup>1</sup>—I find some words which the hon. Member says were used by my right hon. friend the Member for West Birmingham<sup>2</sup> in 1886. I am quite certain that the hon. Member must be wrong in saying that those words were used by my right hon. friend; he could not have used those words, because they are totally untrue. There is not a single word of truth in them. The right hon. gentleman could not have been ignorant of the facts, and, therefore, he could not have used the words. They are directed against State landlordism. In the Bill of 1886 there was nothing affecting England; the Treasury was not the creditor; the British State was not the proprietor; the Irish authority was the proprietor; no power was given to the representatives of the British Exchequer to levy one single shilling towards the recovery of the advances under the Bill, but it was wholly an Irish matter. The equivalent of the Irish advances was simply to be deducted from the gross amount of the public funds of Ireland. Until that had been done not a single shilling was to be applied to expenditure. The passage I am going to quote is, I believe, strictly, literally, and absolutely applicable to the present Bill. There are only three lines, but they are sufficiently pungent, and the virtue of their pungency is to be found in their truth as applied to the Bill now before us. They run—

“Bear in mind this, working men of England and Scotland, you will be the Irish landlords; you will have to evict the tenants; you will have to collect the arrears at the point of the bayonet; and I refuse to be a party to such a transaction.”

In my opinion, sir, the knowledge—if even the deficiency is only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or is any percentage whatever—the knowledge that the eviction of the purchasing tenant is by the agency and for the behoof of the British Treasury forms a conclusive objection to any large measure of Irish purchase in which it is included.

<sup>1</sup> Mr Keay.

<sup>2</sup> Mr J. Chamberlain.

Now I come to my fourth and last objection, that is to the terms which, when we first heard them, and before it was realised what they meant, were naturally and of necessity almost seductive to the ears of every Member of the House. The terms of purchase were to be adjusted between the landlord and the tenant by voluntary arrangement. There are some of us who are accused of wishing to have voluntary arrangements in certain cases where at present there are legal State arrangements; and on this occasion the friends of voluntary arrangements felt that the statement I have just cited was the best introduction to any measure of this nature. But what is the voluntary arrangement under this Bill? I am bound to think the Government have not sufficiently studied the operation of their voluntary arrangement. I will begin by stating what may seem paradoxical until I have illustrated it, that this provision for voluntary arrangement is a provision under which you will place it in the hands of the landlords of Ireland to transfer to their own pockets, if not the whole, yet nearly the whole of the enormous boon which you think you are providing for the tenant. This is a grave statement, and I could not have made it without being fully convinced of its truth. I first of all assume—what I believe will not be disputed—that this Bill is mainly meant to meet the cases of the tenants who are desirous to buy their holdings in Ireland. I am glad if it is an accommodation to the landlord; but it has always been stated on the other side that to convert occupiers into proprietors is the object they have in view. In order to enable the tenants to buy, what is it that we do? We offer a boon, *prima facie*, a boon which is large, which, if I understand it aright, is enormous. The offered sum of £100 involved in any one of these transactions is, by a touch of the magician's wand, at once reduced to £68. That is how you begin—by a gift of £32 in every £100; £32 of hard money, coined out of British credit, in every £100 of hard money that is to pass. And that is not all; because you likewise provide that the reduced annual payment shall not be a payment in perpetuity, but at the end of 49 years it is to lapse, and the occupying purchaser is to become absolute proprietor. What is the value

of that reversion? I am not going to compute it as an actuary would, and say exactly what it would be; but I do not think I am wrong in putting its present value at £8. Therefore, I say that £40 in every £100 upon every one of these transactions is a boon which you are going to confer upon somebody in Ireland by means of the use of the public credit. To whom are you going to offer it? I do not ask what your intention is—I know it; it is to give it to the man who is now the tenant, and whom you seek to convert into the landlord of his holding. That is your intention. Is it really effected by your legislation? No, sir. In the former measure what was contemplated was that there should be one integral transaction for the passage of the estate; that the whole of these transactions should be carried on by public advances; and that the landlord should have no more to say to the person who had been occupier and was about to become owner. In the Bill it is totally different. If the terms of the Bill, that the landlord and tenant shall agree, are to be followed, provided the two parties are not collusive, they will have no effect whatever. In such a matter collusion implies the connivance of both parties to cheat public justice. I am speaking of the enormous leverage you are about to put in the hands of Irish landlords for the purpose of extracting from the tenants nearly the whole of the immense boon which you are offering. Here are two persons, A and B, in business relations with one another. Parliament makes a grant of £500 to A, the tenant, but attaches to the grant the condition that he must obtain the consent of B, the landlord. A, the tenant, goes to B, the landlord, and says, "I want to buy." "You want to buy," replies the landlord; "that is all very well. You cannot buy without my consent, and I am the stronger party." And, undoubtedly, in the case of a tenant desirous to buy, the landlord is the stronger party. The landlord may exact from the tenant, in the shape of a mortgage on the land, or in the shape of additional years' purchase, any addition whatever to the terms, and into that addition he may import as much of this £40 in every £100 as he can force his tenant to agree to. And, further, it may be worth the while of the tenant to agree as long

as the landlord leaves him something. Suppose the landlord takes £35 out of the £40—that is a good slice; but he may say to the tenant, “If you agree with me, you get £5 in the £100, and you become your own proprietor in the course of 49 years. If you do not agree, you go on paying till the crack of doom.” That is the position in which the two parties are placed. As long as you allow these contracts under the name of voluntary engagements, the landlord can screw out of the tenants whatever terms he likes. I do not mean that every landlord would do this, but there are many who would. I am showing what we ought not to permit. We are placing in the hands of the landlord an instrument enabling him to enrich himself, and to obtain an excessive and exorbitant price for his land, in direct contravention of the intentions of Parliament. That is what Ulster is well aware of. Ulster is not deceived. Ulster sees into it. The tenants there are somewhat stronger than they are upon the average in Ireland; their position is a stronger position; but what is the language they hold? The language they hold is that if you want to have a useful Bill, it must be not voluntary, but compulsory. The tenants must have the right to require that the purchase should take place. That is a very different demand, and it involves a very serious question. I am not going to give an opinion upon that question now. I am pointing out, by an argument which I think irrefragable, that the tenants, for the sake of whom we are going to pledge British credit, will be at the mercy of the landlord. After having made this enormous and unprecedented effort, and placed ourselves in a position of the greatest disadvantage, it is the landlord who will be master of the position. In the division of the spoil the lion’s share will fall to him, and nothing but the leavings and the remnants to the tenant.

These four objections I am prepared to let stand upon their own merits: First, Irish opposition; secondly, the use of the national credit in opposition to the recorded judgment of the country at the last election—a judgment which, in my opinion, none but the country itself is entitled to reverse; thirdly, the evil of State landlordism, which involves large



pecuniary risks, but which involves an evil tenfold greater than any pecuniary risks in the shock to humanity, to order, and to the relations between countries, which must ensue from the abuse of such a power; and lastly, the sad reverse which we experience when we find that, in the name of a voluntary arrangement, we enable the landlord to bring an irresistible pressure to bear on the tenant, with the view and with the effect of extorting from him, perhaps, nearly the whole, or a very large part, of the immense boon which Parliament proposes to confer. In these circumstances, I resign with great regret the hopes which I entertained of being able to support the Bill. I am not sure that I have even now obtained anything like a full comprehension of the Bill. It is an exceedingly complicated measure. I do not know that a more complicated measure, or one so complicated, has ever been brought before us. It contains points of great ambiguity and points of great difficulty. All these might, perhaps, be encountered judiciously, and, with temper and management, might be got rid of. But the four difficulties I have mentioned, all persons in this House, whatever their political creed, will feel constitute points which ought to be placed clearly in the view of the country, and the country ought to know what it is asked to do, and what Parliament may be about to do. For my part, though I have not the smallest idea of joining in any obstructive opposition to this or any other measure whatever, still I feel it to be my bounden duty to make objection to provisions so dangerous and flagrant in their character, tending, on the one hand, to embark the country in pecuniary risks to which it ought not to be exposed, and on the other, to make the question of land purchase not an aid in the settlement of the general question of Ireland, but the means of importing into it new social and pecuniary difficulties, and further and further plunging us into the deepest political embarrassment.

# DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 2ND, 1890

Dr Cameron, one of the members for Glasgow, moved, "That in the opinion of this House, the Church of Scotland ought to be disestablished and disendowed." The motion was rejected by 256 to 218. Mr Gladstone took part in the Debate of March 30th, 1886, on the same subject.

THE hon. gentleman<sup>1</sup> who has just sat down has thought it worth while to refer to a declaration of mine which I will presently allude to. He has already referred to a declaration made, as he stated, by the electors of Mid Lothian, showing the majority of constituents in that county, which he stated at 67 per cent., to be adverse to the Disestablishment of the Scotch Church. If my memory serves me, that declaration did not embrace all the parishes of the county; but certain of those parishes were left out on principles which no doubt approved themselves to the promoters of the declaration. I will not enter upon a discussion of that declaration, because an attempt to appreciate it with exactitude might lead me into invidious remarks. What I say, in answer to my hon. friend, is that I shall be most happy to answer the electors of Mid Lothian for my conduct in respect to that declaration, and for the vote I am about to give to-night; and not only so, but I shall be thankful to Her Majesty's Government, and to the hon. Member if he uses his influence with Her Majesty's Government in that direction, if they will give me that opportunity at the earliest possible moment. Then the hon. gentleman will receive the fullest satisfaction, I have no doubt, at all events with regard to that portion of his speech.

The speech of the hon. Member has suggested to my

<sup>1</sup> Mr J. A. Campbell, Member for Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities.

mind this question: Upon what ground of principle is the Established Church of Scotland defended? The whole of his speech has consisted of observations in detail, showing how respectable and creditable the Church of Scotland is, in the activity and devotion of its members, which no one will dispute, or showing that some particular piece of evidence alleged by the promoters of this Motion is of smaller value than they have esteemed it to be. In point of fact, the hon. gentleman has not looked at the crop in the field, but at the gleanings he could pick up. He has endeavoured to construct a case out of almost infinitesimal particulars on which to justify the continuance of the national establishment. It was stated, I think well, by my hon. friend the Member for East Aberdeenshire, that the burden of proof in a case of this kind rests with those who maintain the principle of Establishment. ["Oh, oh."] Is it not so? ["No, no."] Is it not so? ["No."] Then it is contended that, when one religious body out of a number is invested with exclusive possession of national treasure for the purposes of religious worship, that one privileged religious body is under no obligation whatever to show reasons for the preference. That is the doctrine of those gentlemen who cry "No." I am not saying whether they show reasons or not; but I am saying it is their duty to show reason.

What are the reasons upon which the maintenance of a religious Establishment may be defended? I am not going to argue this question on abstract principles. Many Members of this House lay it down as a first principle of politics that in no case can the maintenance of a religious establishment be defended. I do not intend to argue the question upon that ground, and I leave that principle apart, without either affirming or denying it. I look at this case as a case to be decided upon its own merits, with reference to the wants and the circumstances of Scotland. Now, sir, I ask what are the grounds upon which the existence of a religious establishment can be pleaded? As far as I know, they have always been these four—either that the religious establishment was performing some special religious work in the country—for instance, such as the care of the poor—which no

other body could perform, or that it was testifying to the maintenance of certain truths and doctrines which no other religious body could so effectually maintain, or that it was the Church to which the decided majority of the people belonged, or, finally, that it was the Church to which either the decided majority of the people belonged, or, even without belonging to it, yet wished to maintain in the position of the National Church Establishment. Those are the arguments which have often been pleaded, and which possibly might prevail with a majority of this House for the maintenance of our interest in a religious establishment. But how can any of those four arguments be maintained in the case of the Church of Scotland? That is the question which I propose to try. It is idle to say that the Church of Scotland is doing good work. It is a body composed of men who, as far as the laity are concerned, may, I believe, bear a fair comparison with the members of other religious communions, and, as far as their clergy are concerned, everybody acknowledges the merits of their devotion to their duties, but those qualities the Church of Scotland shares with all the other religious bodies known to exist in Scotland, and consequently they are qualities which form no ground whatever for the preference of an exclusive position. As far as the poor are concerned, in my opinion it would be idle to contend that the Established Church of Scotland was concerned with the poor of that country in any sense except in that important sense in which every religious communion of the country is concerned with them by exercising a most beneficial influence, so that that ground for preference for the Established Church does not exist.

Well, sir, as regards the question of testimony to particular truths—which I refer to rather as what has been historically available in other times than as a topic which would very much avail at the present period—it was greatly urged in the case of the Church of Ireland that it was necessary to maintain it as a protest against the real or supposed influence or the possible influence of the Roman Catholic Church in that country. Now, sir, is the Established Church of Scotland to be maintained upon the ground that it is the only and the essential defender

of the principles of the Presbyterian religion in Scotland? Why, sir, it would be ludicrous to adopt such a plea in defence of the Established Church of Scotland. If there are in Scotland to be found those who in a peculiar and pre-eminent sense are the representatives of the Scottish Reformation and its principles, they are to be found, not in the Established Church of Scotland, but in the Free Church of Scotland and in the United Presbyterian body. These are the persons among whom the distinctive principles of the Scottish Reformation are maintained; and I was surprised when I heard the hon. gentleman opposite quietly stating that the Church of Scotland was really in substantial correspondence with the Church of England as to the position it occupied in the religious world of that country. The hon. Member seems to blot out from his recollection everything that happened between the time of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the time of the Scottish Union. What were the relations between the Presbyterians of Scotland and the representatives of the English Church in Scotland during the reign of Charles II., at the period of the Revolution, and at the period of the Union? Why, sir, the history of this country—a highly honourable history in many respects of free and courageous assertion of conscientious convictions—utterly contradicts the statement of the hon. gentleman, and testifies to the sharp antagonism which at that period prevailed between the representatives of the Church of England and the genuine and thorough-going Presbyterians of Scotland. I will not enter into the question whether in every case the existence of an Established Church is a grievance to those who do not belong to it; but I am inclined to think it is not altogether unreasonable if the members of the Free Church of Scotland and of the United Presbyterian body regard it as a grievance in Scotland; and on these two specific grounds. In the first place, it is they who went out into the desert, so to speak, relinquishing all the temporal advantages of Establishment, and undertaking all the responsibility at a moment's notice of provision for themselves, not because they differed from the historical basis of that Presbyterian Church, but because they were anxious

to maintain it intact in its full force and integrity; and, secondly, because in 1874 a measure<sup>1</sup> was passed in relation to Church patronage, the whole effect of which could only be—and I am bound in honesty to say that in my belief the intention only was—to draw back piecemeal and man by man as far as possible from the Free Church and the United Presbyterian body—and from the Free Church particularly—those whom in 1843<sup>2</sup> they had compelled to undertake the responsibility of provision for themselves.

According to modern principles, perhaps the fairest of these arguments to which I have referred for an Established Church is that it is the Church of the decided majority of the people of the country. But is the Presbyterian Church of Scotland the Church of the decided majority of the people? [Mr J. A. CAMPBELL—Certainly.] Then you maintain that it is certainly the Church of the decided majority? [Mr J. A. CAMPBELL—Yes.] I admire the boldness of that assertion. I hope the hon. Member will have an opportunity of producing his arguments and proofs; but what I have observed is this: that as we have heard of those who are more Royalist than the King and more Popish than the Pope, so here is a gentleman, sitting on the benches of this House, who claims for the Established Church of Scotland, and who offers to prove a great deal more than the representatives of that Established Church claim for themselves. [Sir A. CAMPBELL—The Presbyterian Church.] I beg your pardon, I said the Established Church. Surely no hon. gentleman supposes I am saying the Presbyterian Church is not the Church of the majority. On the contrary, it has been urged that if you accede to the Motion of my hon. friend, you will lay the foundation for reuniting in one religious communion three-fourths of the people of Scotland. Then it is admitted that the Established Church of Scotland is in a minority. ["No."] If it is not admitted by hon. gentlemen opposite, it is admitted by the representatives of the Established

<sup>1</sup> The Scotch Church Patronage Act.

<sup>2</sup> The year of the great secession from the Scottish Church and establishment of the Free Church.

Church, who have circulated among us for our information a statement which represents their case, as it was very natural they should represent it, in the most favourable form. What is that statement? It is a statement of the number of marriages according to the rites of the different religious communities in Scotland, and, according to that statement, the marriages performed according to the rites of the Established Church of Scotland are a trifle under 47 per cent. of the whole. I understand the hon. gentleman to maintain that according to the laws of his arithmetic 47 per cent. is more than 53 per cent. Because, unless that is so, by the assertion of the champions of the Established Church, it is the Church of the minority of the population. I am bound to say, that, in my opinion, these statistics represent the case too favourably for the Established Church. If the same figures were taken for England, I think you would find that between three-fourths and four-fifths of the population appeared by the marriage statistics to belong to the Established Church. Every one knows that marriage statistics represent on behalf of the Established Church more than is her due. It is admitted that the Established Church of Scotland is the Church of the minority.

How is it with regard to the fourth of the grounds I have referred to—namely, that although it may not represent the religious convictions and associations of a majority of the population, yet it does represent the wish of a majority of the population that it should be maintained as the Established Church of the country? In my opinion, that is a question which we ought most carefully to examine and probe to the bottom. My noble friend the Member for Rossendale<sup>1</sup> was the leader of the Liberal party in 1877, when he used these words in Edinburgh, and was received with cheers when he used them:—

“All I can say is that whenever Scotch opinion, or even Scotch Liberal opinion, is fully formed on this subject, I think I may venture to say on behalf of the Liberal party as a whole, that they will be prepared to deal with the question.”

After my noble friend had made that declaration I took an

<sup>1</sup> The Marquis of Hartington.

early opportunity of expressing my full concurrence with him in the spirit of that declaration. In the spirit of that declaration I waited until the evidence in the case, according to the best of the powers I had of testing it, should come to be clear and conclusive. I think, sir, we have now reached that point. I cannot doubt that the declarations of the people of Scotland on this question are sufficient to leave no doubt in the minds of Members of this House, if they believe in the Parliamentary representative system under which the country is governed. It is all very well for the hon. gentleman who has just sat down to refer to Petitions presented, and to pass by entirely the question what is the sense of the regularly-chosen representatives of the people of Scotland; but I contend that the greatest weight is due to the opinion of Scotland, constitutionally expressed. It appears to me that whatever view gentlemen may take of the movement, be it a great or a small one, that now exists in Scotland with the view of establishing what is termed Home Rule in that country, whatever may be the view each individual takes upon it, it ought not to bear upon, and hardly can have a bearing adverse to the Motion of my hon. friend. If we are favourable to the establishment of Home Rule in Scotland, we will vote for my hon. friend; but if any one be opposed to the establishment of Home Rule in Scotland, or if any one desires to suspend his judgment, at any rate until he has full evidence, if he does not desire to stimulate unnaturally and fictitiously the progress of this Home Rule movement in Scotland, the wisest thing he can do is to give large scope and large weight and influence to the answer the Scotch people give in deciding Scotch questions.

I am glad to see the Chief Secretary for Ireland<sup>1</sup> in his place, because I wish to make an observation or two upon a speech he made upon this subject on a former occasion. He then brought forward and paraded before us what he thought would be a very effectual bugbear to deter us from the course we wished to pursue. He said—

<sup>1</sup> Mr A. J. Balfour.



"If you are prepared to urge that Scotch questions shall be decided according to Scotch opinion, you must be prepared to urge that English questions shall be decided according to English opinion. And if you act on that principle, where will you, the Liberal party, be then? For since 1868 you have never had a Liberal majority in England."

Such is the statement of the right hon. gentleman—a most imposing and terrifying statement, most effectual and admirable, if it had had the slightest basis in fact. It is the practice of the right hon. gentleman to assume to be true that which he wishes to be true, unless he happens to know it is false. This is entirely false. He paraded before us this most amazing proposition—that from 1868 onward there had been a majority of English Members opposed to the Liberal cause. How does that stand? It stands thus. Whenever we have had a Liberal majority in the aggregate, we have had a Liberal majority in England also. There have been five elections since that date. In three, there have been Liberal majorities; and in two, Tory majorities. In the Parliament of 1868 there was a Liberal majority, and there was a Liberal majority in England of 42 voices. In the Parliament of 1880 there was a Liberal majority, and there was a Liberal majority in England taken alone of 79 voices. In the Parliament of 1885, again, there was a Liberal majority, and there was a Liberal majority in England of 47 voices. Therefore, sir, I may say two things. In the first place, the right hon. gentleman little knows the material of which the Liberal party is made if he thinks that through fear of damage to their party interests in England they are prepared to impose false principles on Scotland adverse to the fair consideration of their claims. This was an assertion which, if it had been a fact, would, no doubt, have been very telling, but it is pure fiction invented in the ingenious brain of the right hon. gentleman. Well, that was the case with regard to Liberal opinion in England. What is now the state and what has been the progress of recent opinion in Scotland? The hon. Member who has just sat down says that on account of two divisions in this House I intend now to cease from the course of abstinence which I pursued in 1886 and 1888.

and vote in favour of Disestablishment. It is quite true that I do so intend to vote, but it is not true that I look simply at the fact that there have been two divisions in this House. Let me point out to the hon. Member that there is a great deal more in the circumstances before us than the mere occurrence of two divisions. What were these two divisions, and what are the other signs now before us as to the movement of opinion in Scotland? In the first place, I will say it is quite true that, in 1885, a kind of truce was established, and it was understood in the Parliament of that year—so far, at least, as the Metropolis and the metropolitan county were concerned—it was quite understood that the returns that might be made were not to be taken, so far as some of us, at least, thought, as giving decisive indications in regard to the question of Disestablishment in Scotland. That truce was brought to an end, at least, in my judgment, and I believe in the judgment of many others, by the able action of the hon. and learned gentleman the Member for Inverness,<sup>1</sup> who declined to recognise the *status quo*, and brought in a Bill regarded by us as of an aggressive character, thus entirely putting an end to any understanding of that kind. However that may be, with the Parliament of 1885 the whole matter passed away. Since then, it is true, we have had two divisions,<sup>2</sup> and are to have the third division to-night. But have we nothing before us but the fact that there have been two divisions?

In the first place, we have this—that in both those divisions a majority of Scotch Members voted in favour of Disestablishment. How do the figures stand? They are capable of being presented shortly and simply. In the division of 1886 the Scotch Members voting for Disestablishment were 24, those voting against it 16, and 32 were absent. That is to say, that three to two of Scotch Members voted in favour of Disestablishment, and nearly one-half were absent from the division. That is my case, because my point is this—not only that the opinion of the constitutional representatives of Scot-

<sup>1</sup> Mr Finlay.

<sup>2</sup> March 30, 1886, and June 22, 1888.

land is in favour of Disestablishment, but that it is increasingly in favour of it; that there is a regular and steady movement in Scotland, the evidence of which cannot be mistaken, all tending in that direction. That was in 1886. What happened in 1888? There declared for Disestablishment in the division of that year 40 Scotch Members, against it 20, and there were absent 12. Instead of there being three to two, the numbers voting in favour of Disestablishment were two to one, and instead of one-half, or nearly one-half, of the Scotch Members being absent, we had exactly only one-sixth of them absent. And then what was the case with the gross majority in this House, composed, I need not say, of English Members, voting down the sense impressed on behalf of Scotland, supported by Wales and by Ireland? The gross majority in 1886 was 112; in 1888 it sank to a majority of 52. Was there no other indication of opinion in Scotland at that time? We have seen that the Scottish majority increased, that the number of Scottish absentees diminished, and that the aggregate majority diminished. Are there no other indications? Yes, the current elections. The hon. Member says there were two elections in Scotland, and desires us from those two divisions to understand what was the opinion of Scotland. Let him enlarge his vision. Instead of keeping in view the two elections which, as he truly says, have taken place in Scotland, let him take into view the fourteen elections which, excluding one or two ministerial re-elections, constitute, I believe, the whole of the Scottish elections since 1886. Out of these fourteen elections, three persons have been returned to vote against Disestablishment, and eleven to vote in favour of it, and not accidentally returned to vote in its favour; but when the question has been fully ventilated and discussed, and brought in every possible and imaginable form before the constituencies, I must own that it does appear to me that there is no doubt at all, either about the condition of opinion in Scotland, if we are to adopt the usual constitutional practice of ascertaining what that opinion is, or as to the direction in which that opinion is moving.

I think it quite worth while to mention another indication

which is to be drawn from the action of Her Majesty's Government themselves, or, at any rate, from the action of the body which the Government has appointed. It will be remembered that we made an endeavour last year to obtain in the Scotch Universities Bill a change in the law with respect to theological tests; that change in the law was refused by Her Majesty's Government, who, notwithstanding, so far recognised the circumstances of the time that they made an arrangement under which a Royal Commission was to be appointed for the consideration of the subject. That Royal Commission has sat, and I believe that it has taken the bulk of the evidence that it is to take. I believe I am not wrong in stating that in Scotland the confident anticipation prevails that the Commission will recommend the abolition or the essential alteration of the theological tests. I mention that, because I do not intend to quote prejudiced opinion on the subject. I only quote what I understand to be the general opinion in Scotland with respect to this question. I only mention that as another indication of the movement in Scotland and the state of Liberal conviction upon this subject. The hon. gentleman says, "Oh, no, there ought to be a dissolution on the question. There ought to be a specific reference of this question, unmingled with other questions." Now, sir, is that a rational statement? That is a demand for a dissolution of Parliament, and for an election at which the people are to consider nothing except the question of Establishment in Scotland; 40,000,000 of people inhabiting these islands are to elect a new Parliament and grant a new lease of power for seven years, in order to determine whether in a country in which the voluntary system is more perfectly organised than in any other country, except, perhaps, America, 18,000 people are or are not to continue to enjoy two or three hundred thousand a year! I do not think, when the hon. gentleman sees his own proposal described in the light of fact, he can suppose it is to be entertained for a moment.

We know perfectly well, sir, what the opinion of the people in Scotland is; and if we believe in Parliamentary Government, if we believe in the representative system—and I do not think

there can be any serious doubt as to the hon. gentleman's belief in them—we must take, and can only take, the deliberate and repeated acts of the legitimately-chosen representatives of the people as conclusively showing the conviction entertained by the people. I do not believe there ever was a country where the question of Disestablishment is so simple as in Scotland, or where it could be introduced so entirely without shock or serious trouble. The hon. gentleman said it would be the greatest change since the Union. Now, sir, I join issue with him on that point, and I claim his assent as a fair-minded man to this proposition—that it would not entail one-tenth of the violence of change that was entailed by the disruption of 1843; 700,000 people in the Church of Scotland, and the majority of ministers at that time, at once abandoned the advantages of Establishment, gave up their churches, gave up their schools, gave up their colleges and their manse that sheltered their wives and children, and walked out trusting in Providence to find a substitute for them where they could. What violence of change at all to be compared with that would take place in this instance? There may be differences of view as to the spirit in which changes of this kind should be carried into effect, and I have a very decided opinion that they ought to be carried into effect with a considerate and tender hand. I may refer here, I think, to the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. I do not refer to the Act of Disestablishment as it finally passed, because that Act contained concessions to the action of the House of Lords, which certainly upon their own merits I could not then pretend to justify; but I take the Act as it passed this House originally, and I say that that was an example of fair and considerate treatment; and I hope when the time comes, when in some other part of the United Kingdom the same principle may be applied, it may be applied in a similar temper and in a similar spirit. I think equity dictates that method of procedure, and I am quite sure that policy strongly and powerfully recommends it. It is easy to show in abstract argument that those enjoying an exceptional privilege do not derive from that enjoyment any claim for the future; but in this country we have acted in ecclesi-

astical matters and in all civil matters, in every detail of the public service, on the opposite principle, and the possessors of a privilege, when that privilege is recognised as unjust or impolitic, and when accordingly a legislative sentence has been pronounced upon it, have always been considerably and generously treated.

What is the case of the Church of Scotland? I believe there is no case so simple as the case of that Church. People talk of separating disestablishment and disendowment; but without disendowment, disestablishment would be an actual shadow. There is no secular power, there is nothing that can be grasped belonging to the Church of Scotland except the advantages of stipend. I make no doubt that private endowment would be recognised. It would, perhaps, be a generous thing on the part of the Free Church and the United Presbyterians, if they consented to forgo a share in the private endowments, given in great part by members of their own body before the Disruption. Although they might in argument make a very fair and legitimate claim to them, I nevertheless believe that the liberal and generous sentiments in favour of actual possession would remain.

Then there is another question—the question of the manse and fabrics—and that question is the only one known to me with respect to which even the difficulty of a couple of hours' discussion would be entailed in order to determine what should be done. The House is aware that in Scotland the fee-simple of the manse and ecclesiastical fabrics does not lie with the corporation sole, the parish, or the cathedral. The heritors now possess them, but they can only use them for the purposes of the Church; and if you take them from the heritors, it may fairly be said, I think, that the heritors would obtain an immediate and fortunate relief from the contingent demands which are made upon them from time to time for the enlargement of the parochial stipends. That would be a benefit to the heritors, and it might not be inequitable that they should be called upon to surrender their title to the manse and fabrics. If that were done, it might happen, I think, that the House would do in this case what was done in the case of

Ireland, and award compensation for these ecclesiastical fabrics to the Church when disestablished; and with regard to the manses, at any rate, some fair and equitable provision should be adopted. There is no sign that a change of this kind would be attended with any difficulties. On the contrary, when it comes it will come through the recognition in this House of what is due to the claims of Scotland—through the recognition of the principle laid down by my noble friend near me, with regard to which I have no indication as to his intention to act upon it or to cast it behind him. On that subject I have no information, but the principle is a sound, just, and good principle, and I hold myself indebted to my noble friend for having uttered it. I need only follow him on the path which he has opened for me, and, on the unquestionable evidence which has now been placed before us in the most constitutional form, I shall be acting upon a moderate application of this principle both of good sense and of justice, to which we must look for the satisfaction and peace of the country and the permanence of its institutions.

# LOCAL TAXATION BILL

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 13, 1890

In the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Bill, the Government proposed to compensate publicans in England, in certain cases, for the extinction of their licences. The "compensation" clauses met with great opposition, and were finally withdrawn. On May 15, on the motion to read the Bill a second time, Mr Gladstone spoke, and he returned to the subject on June 13, when, in Committee, he opposed one of the Ministerial clauses, which, however, was carried by 275 to 243. In 1888, when the Government had inserted Licensing Clauses (afterwards withdrawn) in the Local Government Bill, Mr Gladstone (at Hawarden, May 26) had criticised the principle of "converting a licence into an estate."

I SHALL not enter on the very tempting matter of considering the consistency of the vote which the hon. gentleman<sup>1</sup> who has just sat down is about to give with that which he gave in 1888. There are wider matters before us. I shall notice briefly one or two of the allegations of the hon. gentleman. It has been asserted confidently and boldly on the other side of the House that this Bill does not sanction the principle of compensation, and that has been a main ground, I may say the main ground, upon which Her Majesty's Government have commended it to the acceptance of the House. But the hon. gentleman, whose support as that of an independent Member is valuable for other reasons than the rarity of such support in this debate, has given as his main reason for supporting the Bill that which absolutely contradicts and oversets the fundamental principle of the Government, because he has supported the Bill on the ground that the Bill embodies the principle of compensation, which they maintain it does not establish. And those contradictory declarations are, notwithstanding, to result in one and the same vote in one and the same lobby. I agree more with the hon. gentleman on that point than with the Government, except in this, that I contend

<sup>1</sup> Mr T. W. Russell, Member for South Tyroë.



we are not now discussing the question of compensation at large—very many Members of the House have the strongest opinion upon that subject—but what we are discussing now, as was defined by the hon. Member for Barrow,<sup>1</sup> is the principle of that compensation which is actually before us. The hon. gentleman then went on to challenge the judgment of the temperance leaders. He challenged their proceedings upon two occasions, and on one of them I will make a remark. His want of confidence in their judgment leads him to vote against the course they recommend. He refers to 1871—and here I have the pleasure of agreeing with very much of what he says—and he says the Bill of that year<sup>2</sup> would have done a world of good and effected a vast reduction in the number of public-houses. I am not indisposed to accept that statement, as I was one of the Government responsible for the formation and introduction of that Bill. What is the respective guilt of parties in respect of that Bill? That Bill, no doubt, failed in some degree, owing mainly to one particular cause—the opposition of the publicans; but, combined with that opposition, to the indifference and lukewarmness of the Temperance party. But the opposition of the publicans was the opposition of hon. gentlemen opposite, and the gentleman who is so shocked at going with temperance reformers, because they were lukewarm in the cause of what he considers a good measure, has no scruple at all about acting with those, who, as he says, were in full cry against the Bill, with the principle of which he says he agrees. The hon. gentleman says he will vote for the Bill mainly on account of the Irish portion of it;<sup>3</sup> but is that the main portion of the Bill? Am I to look into every corner of a Bill, and, disregarding its main scope and purpose, if I find some particular nook or cranny where there is something I approve of, such as the

<sup>1</sup> Mr Caine.

<sup>2</sup> A Licensing Bill introduced by Mr Bruce, Home Secretary, afterwards Lord Aberdare.

<sup>3</sup> Mr Russell had said, "This Bill applies to Ireland. . . . It has been decided that once a licensed publican in Ireland gets his licence, he may sell it, and the licensing authority cannot refuse to transfer except the applicant is of bad character or conducts his house in an improper manner."

operation of the Bill in Ireland, then to say that on that account I will accept the whole Bill? The public-houses in Ireland are for the supply of 5,000,000 persons, and those in England for the supply of 35,000,000. Is it rational, when you are dealing with a Bill which affects 35,000,000, to overlook all the considerations that can be urged against the Bill in respect of its operation on the 35,000,000, and to say, "I will look only at the effect it has on the 5,000,000 of Irish people?"

MR T. W. RUSSELL—My position is that I consider the Irish publican has a legal right and the British publican an equitable right, and I am anxious in the interests of temperance to do something by which that right may be recognised as speedily as possible.

MR GLADSTONE—The claim made in the interests of temperance I wish by-and-by to bring to the test. My complaint is that the hon. Member said he was greatly governed by the operation of the Bill in Ireland, and I say that the operation of the Bill in Ireland is of necessity a secondary and subordinate operation of the Bill, which it is quite possible to subject to separate treatment. If there is a legal right in Ireland, it constitutes no reason for voting for a Bill which is to operate disadvantageously as regards public-houses in England. The hon. Member reminds us that the hon. Member for Barrow had said that Bill would be fatal to what he termed the Unionist party, which I believe to be the Disunionist party, but which, out of courtesy, I will call the Unionist party, although that involves a contradiction of my convictions and feelings. The hon. member for Barrow, in the course of his able speech, has defended himself against being supposed to be a lukewarm supporter of the present Government, and of the so-called Unionist cause; but my hon. friend might have spared himself that trouble, seeing the amount of valuable matter he had to produce. We have all had quite sufficient experience of his zeal on behalf of that party to believe firmly in his sincerity. The hon. Member for South Tyrone said—"If the Bill will have the effect, as you allege, of ruining the Unionist party, why do you not vote for it and ruin that party?" No doubt the hon.

member thought that in offering that suggestion he had made a great *coup*. We believe this Bill to be of vital consequence, and we believe it to be as ruinous as it is important, and, that being so, it is totally against our principle to vote for this Bill for the sake of ulterior objects. I am not surprised at the argument of the hon. gentleman, because, as I understand him, and the body of Members with whom he has been acting, they have become habituated to this practice of continually voting for measures they disapprove of, and refraining from the support of measures of which they approve, simply because of that ulterior object which the hon. gentleman recommends us on this occasion to keep exclusively in view. The hon. Member will understand that I cannot accept the advice he has kindly given us.

I was obliged to intervene in this debate, although the House has kindly heard me before, on account of my responsibility for the use of a particular term. Before I advert to that, I wish to say a word upon the Amendment. I am able to support what has been said in the able speech of the hon. Member for the Carnarvon Boroughs.<sup>1</sup> We do not admit this Bill to be a step in the direction of temperance. The principle is perfectly sound that you should not insist upon achieving at once your whole object and ultimate aim when you have not the force that is necessary for that purpose, but you should be content to arrive at it step by step. This is all very well; but, according to our view, and especially according to the view of the Principality of Wales, it is true that this Bill takes a step, but it is a step in the wrong direction, it is a retrograde step that leads us a great deal further from the purpose aimed at than we were before. I believe the people of Wales especially look upon this Bill as poison, while they regard as food the provision for education proposed by the Amendment; and they say, "Take away the poison and give us the food." In Wales there is a much stronger desire for intermediate schools than can be satisfied with the funds that are available for the purpose. You

<sup>1</sup> Mr Lloyd George, who had made his "maiden" speech that evening.

may tell me, and I admit, that people are ready enough to put their hands into the public purse when it costs them nothing, but it is not so in Wales, for there the people, with laudable public spirit, make immense efforts to provide these schools for themselves. It is in these circumstances the Welsh people ask that this money may be diverted to a purpose of inestimable good of which they approve, from one which will not only not be valuable, but will be mischievous and ruinous to the country. The President of the Local Government Board<sup>1</sup> said that some one had irrationally spoken of this Bill as a Public-house Endowment Bill. I have a strong opinion that there is no more objectionable practice in politics, or one to be more carefully eschewed, than an endeavour to disparage a good cause by affixing upon it a bad name. The right hon. gentleman thinks it is a practice I have indulged in. I accept the full responsibility for the quoted description, and I have not heard any other name which so adequately describes the purpose and operation of the Bill. But a slight mistake has been made; if it be called a Publicans' Endowment Bill, in my opinion that would not be at all a just description. There are many faults in the Bill, grave faults, and it is difficult to determine their order of procedure, but, undoubtedly, among the faults of the Bill not the least is the exceedingly small regard it has for the interests of publicans as compared with the interests of others concerned. I have received a communication from a respectable publican, who expresses his strong objection to this Bill, and declares that it is brought in, not in the interest of his class, but in the interests of others more powerful than they. I do not know if I originated the name for the Bill, I do not know whether any of my hon. friends claim the authorship. I am almost disposed to compete for the honour of the responsibility. Accepting the full responsibility for the description of this Bill as a Public-house Endowment Bill, I will say why it cannot be fairly described by any other name. The hon. Member for Sheffield,<sup>2</sup> in an able and telling speech, referred to the operation of the

<sup>1</sup> Mr Ritchie.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Bernard Coleridge.

Bill upon purchase transactions, and contended that the giving of public money for the extinction of licences invested licences with a value which amounted to endowment. In my opinion, that is not a tenth, nor a twentieth, nor a hundredth part of the sense in which the Bill is an endowment. The mode in which it is an endowment is this. From the moment the Bill has become the law of the land every interest in every public-house will be worth more money in the market, and cannot be acquired except at a higher price. That, I think, is not an unfair mode of stating the case. I want the proposition to be tested. I challenge opposition. Unfortunately this business of vast investment by large proprietary interests in public-houses, as far as I know, has been a monstrous evil, the growth almost entirely of our own time. Within our own time it has swollen to gigantic proportions, and now constitutes the enormous, the almost insurmountable difficulty in the way of dealing satisfactorily with the public-house question. That evil, which is in constant progress, depends upon this, that a certain expectancy of the renewal of the licence leads gentlemen interested in the manufacture of liquor, and makes it worth their while to invest largely in public-houses, and to compensate themselves by binding the publican to buy the liquor they manufacture, irrespective, in a certain degree, either of quality or of price. You are now going to add to that expectancy. To that expectancy, which has been declared to rest upon no legal basis whatever, and the whole value of which may be enormously and detrimentally affected by many conceivable proceedings that could be taken under the present law without raising any claim for compensation, you are now going to add the establishment of this principle, that the authority is to go into the market provided with public money, raised out of the public taxes, and buy up licences, irrespective of the further tremendous objection that the price is virtually to be fixed by the person interested. Will any man tell me that by the establishment of this principle by law, this act of legislative countenance given to the doctrine of vested interest in licences, an approach, at least, will not be made to the laying down an absolute rule that no licence can

be touched—apart from offence against the law—except in consideration of payment of public money? Will any man tell me that that will not at once upraise the value of every saleable public interest from one end of the country to another? If that is so, that is a Public-house Endowment Bill. It does not matter—

MR RITCHIE—We do not say that.

MR GLADSTONE—Do not say what?

MR RITCHIE—We do not say that. We do not interfere in any degree with the existing powers of the Magistrates.

MR GLADSTONE—I am not indisposed to be corrected by-and-by. I will only say at this moment that, in my opinion, there never were more idle words than the words of the right hon. gentleman. The right hon. gentleman evidently thought yesterday that he was making an announcement of importance to the House when he read out exultingly the terms of the Amendment, which is to declare that the local powers of Magistrates shall remain intact. Now, sir, if he were to multiply those Amendments, and plaster them all over his Bill, repeated a hundred thousand times over, laying them thick as leaves in Vallombrosa, or till they were like the advertisements of Pears' Soap, they would not acquire one shade of value in the eyes of any one of the millions of people who are opposed to this Bill. For the prevention of enhancement of value they are absolutely and utterly nugatory. I, therefore, say that this Bill is a Public-house Endowment Bill, because it adds a value to every proprietary interest in premises that are now licensed for the sale of liquor.

Now, sir, it may be a long time before you arrive at the possibility of a comprehensive, sweeping, and conclusive measure with regard to the treatment of the liquor traffic, but I object to this Bill upon two grounds—first of all, that we have under the present law, and compatibly with the principle of the present law, great means and possibilities of good; and, secondly, that you not only take away those means and possibilities, but you also interpose a new and enormous obstacle in that increment of value which is to run throughout the country

in connection with this Bill, to which I have just referred as the Public-house Endowment Bill. The present law has in itself principles that are, at any rate, of some value. The present law rests unquestionably and strictly upon these grounds, among others, that public-houses are to be absolutely limited to the wants of the district. Can any man say that they are so limited? No, sir, they are known to be in multitudes of districts in the country very far in excess even of a most liberal estimate of those wants. Why are they not brought down to the measure of those wants? Because you have the licensing power in the hands of a body which is not well qualified to administer that portion of the present law with the stringency and firmness with which it ought to be administered. We always contended for the placing of that power in the hands of an Elective Authority, and we have been resisted in the endeavour to obtain that object. We are convinced, at least I for one am convinced, that if you got that power—not for the whole purposes of the Temperance party, but for the purpose of acting on the acknowledged principle of the present law—once fairly lodged in the hands of an Elective body, like the County Councils, to be exercised upon their responsibility, very great good would be obtained. I do not mean to say that County Councils would be justified in going to work upon what are called extreme principles of temperance. I will suppose, for the sake of argument, that there might possibly be a County Council with a majority in favour not only of Local Option, but in favour of using that Local Option for the purpose of the total extinction of public-houses—it would be, in my opinion, an entire abuse of the power if it were to act upon that principle, because that is not the principle of the existing law which they are to administer. They are to examine in good faith the question of sufficiency. Examining in good faith the question of sufficiency, they would find immense room for reduction? How does this Bill operate upon that room for reduction? How does it operate upon the possibility of reduction? I will suppose now that the Bill shall unhappily have been passed into law, and I will suppose also, what I have no doubt we shall

see before many years are over, that the licensing power is placed under the control of an Elective Authority in a county. What is, then, to be the position of the Elective Authority? Will any man tell me that that Elective Authority can proceed to-day to pay probably a large sum of money to the person interested in one particular public-house in a district overstocked, and can to-morrow go to deal with the case of another public-house in their licensing operations, and withdraw the renewal of that licence without paying one farthing for it? We have no occasion in this matter to resort to figures of speech. The facts are too grave, too solid, either to require or admit of exaggeration or enhancement. My contention is, that this power which is already established in the law, and which might become a very vigorous and useful power when it was lodged in the hands of a body well fitted for its exercise, is to be reduced to absolute paralysis, and we are to go—I said one step, but I should have said many steps, backward in the way of temperance. In my opinion, the law is capable of immense improvement in ways that would not give the slightest claim for compensation. It is quite plain that if it were the view of Parliament to introduce the public lease system which prevails in Sweden, that might have immense effect in destroying the money value of public-house investments. Very likely it would; but nobody would for one moment say it gave a claim for compensation to anybody. The Member for Barrow made it a point to-night that the direct operation of this Bill must be to pay public money for buying up the licences, not of public-houses merely, but of bad public-houses. Now, this is a separate point in the indictment—a strong point and a capital point. Is it true or is it not true? The President of the Local Government Board has, this evening, used some words which I take to be of very high importance. He has indicated what is to make a public-house into a gold-field. It is misconduct. [Mr RITCHIE expressed dissent.] The right hon. gentleman never used the word “gold-field.” No, I am quoting his sentiments in language which, I thought, would give it a true but



lively expression. To be correct in syllable and letter, the right hon. gentleman said that—

“There were a number of public-houses which did not pay, but which can be made to pay, by doing what, perhaps, they ought not to do.”

I do not think that is far from saying that by misconduct a public-house can be turned into a gold-field.

Mr RITCHIE—What I alluded to was this: I was accused by the hon. Member for Barrow of having said that the public-houses which the County Councils under these powers would buy out would be the bad public-houses. I denied having said so; and in answer to a further challenge, I said that the words I had used in connection with the incident were “the small fry.” Then, again, I was challenged upon the point as to whether or not I had said that the same smaller public-houses were unprofitable unless they had done something which they ought not to have done. I said that many of the owners did get a living in that way. But I never indicated that that was the class which I expected or believed would be bought up by the County Councils.

Mr GLADSTONE—The right hon. gentleman was entitled to interrupt me if he thought I was misrepresenting him; but he has not said a word which contravenes the effect of what I attributed to him. The charge against the right hon. gentleman of his having said that this was the class of public-house which would be bought up by the County Councils is a charge which I did not make. I have made no reference to it. I have not heard the right hon. gentleman say that, and, therefore, I must leave the matter to be dealt with by those who may be inclined to contest the explanation of the right hon. gentleman. I do not enter into the matter, because I have not the necessary knowledge. But, perhaps, as it is a matter of public interest, I may read from a newspaper what the right hon. gentleman is reported to have stated to a deputation—

“We are, however, persuaded that there is an enormous amount of harm done by the smaller houses—houses of comparatively little or no market

value; and they probably would be of no market value if they were conducted in such a way as we should wish to see them conducted."

In referring to the language of the right hon. gentleman I do not at all wish, to use a vulgar phrase, to put him in a corner. I have no such intention. I rather wish to compliment the right hon. gentleman on having made a declaration which was absolutely true, and which was of great value and of great importance in reference to the present subject. I do not say that the right hon. gentleman has said that the ill-conducted houses will be the ones which the County Councils will be placed under the strongest pressure to purchase. I do not know whether he has stated so, but I take the liberty of saying it myself. I found the argument on the Bill as it stands. It invests the County Councils with funds for the purpose of purchase. The Bill as it stands and the Government's declarations have properly encouraged the public and the Local Authorities to make representations to the County Councils for the purchase of licences. What representations will be the strongest? Why, the representations which point out that public-house A or B is a nuisance to the neighbourhood, that it catches all the people—as we have heard of a particular public-house near the dock gates in Liverpool—on the way to their work; a house that would be valueless as an ordinary house, but which is a true gold-field by reason, not so much of its position, as of the manner in which that position is used. The County Councils may, and I think very probably will, decline to be the agents to act under, this Bill. I believe it to be most highly probable that large bodies of public opinion will be put in motion in several localities to prevent the County Councils from laying out the public money in a manner so improvident and so ruinous. But there is a possibility that in some cases opinion will act upon the County Councils to stimulate them to purchase; and, again, I invite contradiction or challenge of this assertion—that where there is this action of extraneous opinion on the County Councils to move in the exercise of powers of purchase, local public opinion will infallibly point, not to the good and well-conducted public-

houses—which every one, even the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth,<sup>1</sup> will desire to keep alive—but to those public-houses, of which there are a certain number, known as a common nuisance to the districts, although the Magistrates have not thought themselves in a position to withdraw the licences, or have thought that the offences were not sufficiently grave to warrant so extreme a punishment.

I do not know what flaw there is in that argument; I do not know how to resist that contention. Any one on the Government Bench who follows me will not, I hope, omit to show that our apprehensions on this ground are ill founded, and that there is no fear of the operation of the Bill putting a premium on the misconduct of public-houses for the purpose of attracting the showers of gold which are to descend on this interest in the extinction of licences. I venture to say that the community will before long be endowed with the power of dealing, through the instrumentality of Local Option, with the existence of public-houses in particular districts; but I exclude for the moment all questions of mode of extinction. I look strictly at the present amount of evil with which we have to deal; and I am not speaking of the moral evil, but of the amount of the obstacle which we have to surmount. That is the enormous pecuniary value connected with these public-houses. I look at the amount of that obstacle and the good that may be done under the present law. In my opinion, very great good can be done under the present law as long as you use it, as you ought to do, without delay. As the hon. gentleman the Member for South Tyrone is so full of the evils of delay, let him promote and accelerate the creation of an elective body to deal with this subject. There is considerable good to be done under the present law. There are great obstacles in its way. This present Bill paralyses entirely all hope of effecting good, and, at the same time, enormously magnifies the evil or obstacle before us by adding tens of millions, and probably scores of millions—and I believe scores of millions—to the already

<sup>1</sup> Sir Wilfrid Lawson.

huge value of the mass of proprietary interests which have unfortunately come to be clustered around these houses.

These, sir, are the grounds, and I think that they are strong, broad, and clear, upon which we intend to vote against this Bill, and we vote against it believing that, while every judgment and voice on this side of the House is given in expression of a clear, conscientious conviction, there are many of the voices on the other side of the House, even if they form a majority, that are reluctant; many that betoken divided minds, many that have reference to a general loyalty to the Government, and not to the merits of the measure. Could we have a true poll in this House—aye or no—on the single and separate question whether this measure is good or bad, we on this side have not a doubt as to the result. Having said that, and having made these objections, I admit frankly the great value of this measure to us as a party. I am extremely reluctant—I am half ashamed, but I cannot help it—to draw party gains from such a subject. But as to the existence of them, there cannot be a doubt. Opposing this Bill with all my heart and soul, as a political and public measure, and firmly convinced that it is a retrogressive step and one of the most fatal kind, I do not for a moment question that every candidate at a bye-election who goes to the country on the Liberal side will profit largely by your unfortunate persistence in this ill-conceived measure. I am compelled to accept that gift; though I would avoid it if I could. I would neutralise and destroy it even now by beseeching the Government, while there is yet time, to withdraw a measure with respect to which every one is puzzled to know why in the world they ever introduced it, and with respect to which the President of the Local Government Board himself has explained that the confident expectations which they entertained of meeting, to a large extent, the views and desires of a vast body of their countrymen with whose intentions and aims they sympathised, have been miserably disappointed.

# SIR L. SIMMONS'S MISSION TO THE VATICAN

NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB, JULY 30, 1890

Mr Gladstone was entertained at dinner at the National Liberal Club by a number of prominent Wesleyans. The Chairman (Mr Perks) proposed the health of Mr Gladstone.

MR PERKS AND GENTLEMEN—When I accepted the obliging invitation which you were so good as to send me, for the purpose of enabling me to meet in a friendly assembly a large number of representatives of most important and energetic religious communions, I accepted that invitation very thankfully, regarding it in the main as a private invitation, and indeed, I might say at the first moment exclusively as a private invitation. But it is very difficult in these times to insure absolute privacy; and you will agree with me that there is not one among us who is ashamed of their proceedings or desirous that they should not meet the light. On the contrary, our desire is that they should all be carried on in the light of day, and long life has increasingly deepened this impression upon my mind, that when we attempt, as we must now and then attempt, at least in inward speculation, to compare the condition of this community, this great British community, with that of other communities, upon most points we might find that there is an advantage on one side and a set-off on the other side; but there is one great, overpowering, inestimable advantage which we possess, and that is the advantage of publicity in all our doings. There is no country where it is so difficult for iniquity to avoid detection, and that is perhaps the most felicitous of all distinctions that can attach to the condition of any country as compared with its neighbouring communities. Well, sir, I am bound, however, to say that one

or two incidents which have arisen since the time of your kind and gracious invitation have made me feel that I ought perhaps to avail myself of this opportunity, with your approval, of saying a word or two to you, not in an attempt at any general review of public affairs, which upon an occasion like this is impossible, nor even to attempt a review of the transactions of this most happy, peculiar, and remarkable Session of Parliament. It would be exceedingly wrong to touch upon that which is at present incomplete, for the Session has not reached its end. I am informed that it is even doubtful on what day of August it will meet its end, though it is hoped that if it meets again in November it will not travel into December. However, that I pass by, nor will I undertake even to notice each one of the particulars which you have opened in your most effective speech upon the present occasion. One word I will say, sir, in meeting this assembly. It is an assembly composed of gentlemen whose sentiments, I believe, are unanimous and whose positions are different. Some, I am happy to think, are among my honoured Parliamentary colleagues; others have already assumed the responsibilities of candidature. Of that portion of the assembly who have not yet assumed these responsibilities I venture to assume, to entertain and express a rather sanguine hope, that they will find their way into that position before very long. The truth is that while undoubtedly our candidates are not so numerous as we might desire them to be, the prospects offered to those candidates are eminently satisfactory. We have nothing to complain of in respect of the condition of the constituencies. It is quite true that the great interests are against us. They have been commonly understood as the interests of wealth, rank, and power; but it also true that there is a force in this country superior to them all—namely, the force of the national heart and national mind; and never has there been a more distinct and conclusive demonstration<sup>1</sup> afforded that that heart and mind are with us than in the years that have

<sup>1</sup> By the bye-elections which had resulted largely in favour of the Liberals. See p. 235.

elapsed since the first assembly of the present Parliament, and the continually growing evidence that the experience of these years has afforded. I hope that every gentleman who is not yet, if I may so say, suited with a constituency whose suffrages he may solicit, will, either by the aid of our excellent friend Mr Schnadhorst<sup>1</sup>—whom I am delighted to see among us after his return in recovered health and strength—or through whatever agency may locally be found expedient and effectual, take his place in the ranks of the army now in course of formation, of which we have a nucleus in the present Parliament—a nucleus that I trust I may say has firmly and resolutely held together in the day of adversity—and that he will join us in the endeavour to attain an end which you have described as superior to every particular end, of every particular interest whatsoever, however great and vital—an end that overshadows every other end, that includes every other end, and without the attainment of which no other end can be attained—I mean the settlement of the great Irish question, in which we contemplate, it is true, justice to Ireland, but not justice to Ireland only, but the restoration of the honour of Britain and the liberation of Parliament from slavery and inefficiency.

Mr Chairman, perhaps the question may arise in your mind, or in the mind of others, What are the occurrences of the last few weeks that have induced me to think that I ought to avail myself of your kindness to allow me to address some words to you on the present occasion? Well, among the interesting incidents of the times—and there are a great many—there are these: that we have had a considerable stir, in Parliament and out of Parliament, in the public mind and in the public press—a considerable stir about the dependencies of the British Empire, which on the first impression of the unobserving mind might perhaps be thought to be insignificant. We have had upon the island of Heligoland<sup>2</sup> questions of great importance raised, whatever the true and proper solution of these questions may be, and we have also had very important

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of the National Liberal Federation.

<sup>2</sup> Arrangements were pending for the cession, afterwards carried out, of this island to Germany. See p. 224.

questions raised with regard to the island of Malta, which I have thought really should demand some notice on this occasion. In a Parliament with a majority of Tories there is not very great utility in persistent and repeated endeavours to impress the mind of the majority with improved and altered views. This is a conclusion which I arrived at in the Parliament of 1874, and if I have not been a resolute disapprover of obstruction upon principle, yet I should have felt it a very disagreeable and painful waste of time to argue with those who did not wish to hear and could not possibly be converted. On this occasion we are in a different position. We are not allowed an opportunity even of stating our views in Parliament upon the question of Malta and upon another question, to which I shall have occasion to refer, more nearly connected with Ireland, more strange in its features than almost any question which has come before me; we are absolutely impotent, the House of Commons is deprived of free speech, and we have no opportunities of setting forth in the most reasonable and moderate manner the views we entertain. Happily that is not the only road to the public ear and to the public mind. It is quite true that there is a sort of general promise that some day or other there shall be a vote proposed for the Foreign Office, and I believe that then members of Parliament, or those of them whose patience may induce them to stay in London, will have an opportunity of making speeches on the subject. But they will not have any opportunity of raising a full discussion, because we are greatly in the dark as to the actual position of affairs. The sentiment which I have expressed as to the enormous value of publicity in public affairs is a sentiment which does not appear to be at all shared by the present Administration. On the contrary, the occasions on which they admit it are few and rare and reluctant, and attended with a great deal of grumbling, and apparently with an internal sense that it is extremely unreasonable, and even factious, on our part, to ask them for any information whatever.

With regard to the case of Malta there are three points which I should like to notice. The first is this. There has gone abroad in the country, and I think in your own denomination,



which is represented in Malta—an apprehension of actual danger to religious liberty—danger to religious liberty in a point the most vital and tender of all—that is to say, the legitimacy and validity of marriages. On that point I would endeavour to reassure you altogether. I am not sure that the danger has not existed, but I feel the utmost confidence that the public notice drawn to this subject within the last three or four weeks is amply sufficient to secure you against any legislation, under any pretext, under any engagement to the Pope or anybody else, that could interfere with the validity of any marriage that has been celebrated in Malta in time past, or may be celebrated in time to come. I shall say no more upon that subject. I think that the actual danger to those who may be desirous of uniting themselves in holy matrimony, or who may so have desired in other times, is one which, if it existed—and I am not ready to say it did not exist—has passed away.

But in the meantime there has been raised a most curious group of questions in connection with Malta. And do not let us suppose that because Malta is a small country the questions arising there are on that account unimportant. I am not speaking of political or military dangers in regard to the British possession of Malta, in which dangers I do not believe, but I am speaking, gentlemen, of my desire, and I am certain it is a desire which all share, that where, through the course of circumstances, we are led to the occupation of an island, the natives of which are not precisely united with ourselves in uniformity of religion or in the bonds of race—if we are to hold that island by the power of England, we are under an obligation that it shall be held with every consideration for the wants and the wishes of the inhabitants, and with the most earnest desire to win and to retain their affection. I am sorry to say that from the very limited information given us in the shape of a little Parliamentary paper giving us an account of a certain embassy of Sir Lintorn Simmons to Rome—a very great novelty in British history—there are a number of questions raised on which I cannot pretend—I have not proper information—to lay before you definite conclusions, or to supply you with

complete information ; but I would point out to you that these are topics of the utmost importance, and which will demand a vigilant observation and watchfulness in the future; and though the year is probably too far gone for very effective discussion of these Maltese questions at the present moment, yet, in the coming Session, in all likelihood, they will call for a good deal of attention, and may give rise to free utterance of important judgments in the House of Commons. Now one of the points is this. There appears to be a purpose promoted by British authority in Malta for something like the disestablishment of the Italian language. There appears to be a desire—I will not say the evidence is demonstrative, but still, in the manner in which the question is brought forward, there seems to be a desire—to a great extent to substitute the British for the Italian language in Malta. Well, I am opposed to any such substitution. I think—and my mind goes back to the case of Wales—that there is nothing in the world that the Welsh would so vividly resent as any officious attempt to change the language of their country. And, gentlemen, they are perfectly right. The union between a nation and its language, the union between even a small people like Wales and its language, is a due and an affectionate union ; it is bound up with all its traditions ; and when we went into Malta we engaged to respect their traditions, and no attempt, no policy I do not care where it began—I believe it began in some former time—but we have evidence before us now which induces me to say that in my opinion the Maltese have been sacredly promised the preservation of their language and institutions, and are entitled to claim among the very first elements of that promise that we shall pay due respect to the customs established among them and inherited from their forefathers, which are bound up with all their ideas, and which above all they wish to retain.

Well, I pass from that matter, but I have alluded to it because it is mixed up with many things and many questions in regard to a country where language cannot be overlooked and cannot be excluded. But there is a great deal more than that. There has been a most singular and extraordinary embassy under-

taken by Sir Lintorn Simmons, the Governor of Malta, who, while the Governor of Malta, has been appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Rome. But there is no Court of Rome. When there was a Court of Rome, I quite understand that, according to English ideas, it was quite possible—many thought it was expedient, although some thought it was dangerous, but however that may be, it is immaterial to the present purpose—that there should be an Embassy to the Court of Rome. Pope Pius IX. down to 1870 was as much a sovereign in the eye of the law as any ruler of Europe; but the Pope at the present moment is not a sovereign at all. I admit that many of the powers of Europe have sent ministers to the Pope, but we are not accustomed to regulate our proceedings with regard to the Court of Rome by those of other countries. However, a minister has been sent there, and he has been sent to raise questions with respect to the law of Malta, and one of the most important of these questions has relation to marriages in Malta.

Now Malta is a Roman Catholic country. The Protestants—the non-Roman Catholics of that island—are a very small minority. It is rather surprising that this Embassy or Legation has not at all had reference to the marriages of the majority, so far as I can make out from these papers, but only to the marriages of the minority, partly to what are called mixed marriages, and partly—and this is the astonishing point to which I wish to call your attention—to marriages to be contracted between persons who have nothing whatever to do with the law of Rome or the See of Rome. With regard to mixed marriages I shall say very little excepting this—that I do not think it is our business to interfere between the conscience of Roman Catholics who choose to enter into mixed marriages and the spiritual head of their Church. That, in my opinion, is a matter entirely for them to settle. It is not our business to meddle with it. We have to look at the essential civil conditions of valid marriage; and what lies beyond that is to be settled between the Pope—a gentleman, I believe, most highly entitled to every

possible respect in his personal character—and those who adhere to him in point of religious communion. But I do not propose to allot to Roman Catholics the position of others. I find a letter from the Cardinal, who is the chief officer to the Pope in conducting all this correspondence, and I find from this letter, which is at page 10 of the Parliamentary papers, a letter dated the 17th of January of this year, that the Cardinal states that he has called the attention of the public to a demand or request—it does not mean demand in an imperative sense, but means a request—made to the British Envoy, which he proceeds to describe; and therefore we have no title whatever to complain of his Holiness the Pope in this matter. He has done nothing to take into his hands the powers and the rights that the British Government offered. All he has done is that he has simply answered their request and nothing else. And how does he answer it? He answers it by saying that his Holiness declares certain things. He declares certain things in an official and authoritative capacity. And one of those things is this—that persons professing any other religion—that is, any other than the Roman Catholic religion—may virtually celebrate their marriage without the necessity of going through the form established by the Council of Trent. So that, gentlemen, if any of you should go to Malta and desire to be married, your title to be married in Malta—to contract a valid marriage there—would depend upon this declaration of the Pope that you were authorised to do it.

Well, that is an entire and absolute novelty in the history of England. I say that it is a novelty, first of all, for the last three hundred and fifty years since the Reformation; but my belief is that you would find it an entire novelty for three hundred and fifty years before the Reformation. I do not believe that before the Reformation, when there was little or no outer difference of religious communion in this country, the people of England went to the Court of Rome in order to ask instructions from the Pope when they were going to be married, and how their marriage was to be made valid and legitimate. For, unless I am much mistaken, during the whole of that time, by the common law of Christen-

dom and of this country, a valid marriage was celebrated without the benediction of the Pope. Now we are to be told, not merely if we are Roman Catholics, but if involved in a mixed marriage outside the fold of the See of St Peter, as it is called, that we are to have our marriage made valid by a declaration of the Pope in the terms which I have read. The Pope is most courteous. He goes on to assure—or his Cardinal goes on to assure—Sir Lintorn Simmons that any legislation which is in accord with these declarations—in the dominions of the Queen, mind you, in the Island of Malta—will not meet with any opposition on the part of the Pope. I endeavour to console and reassure you as to the danger of the validity of any marriage in Malta. By the distinct categorical and repeated declarations of Her Majesty's Government, and by the action of the Roman See—which does not go beyond those declarations, and makes no aggressive claim but accepts the generous offer which what is sometimes considered a strong Protestant Ministry has made—the validity of these marriages is to be held on title and mandate from the Pope himself.

There are a great number of other very curious matters which I wish to deposit in your minds. Sir Lintorn Simmons travelled to Rome, and, naturally, was obliged to incur some expense. He incurred the expense, I think, of £800 for a mission which lasted some months; and really, when I look at the expenses of some of the missions that we have had, I think Sir Lintorn Simmons was extremely moderate in the bill which he ran up—against whom? Against the country, I was going to say; but no; not against the country. The Government have taken exceedingly good care not to ask the House of Commons for a vote for the expenses of the mission of Sir Lintorn Simmons, although I believe that there is no case upon record of a diplomatic mission, undertaken under the authority of the Crown, the expenses of which have been paid from any other source than the pocket of the British taxpayer, with the legitimate authority and control of the House of Commons. However, it was thought more convenient to resort to Malta. But Malta was not willing to pay; and it was not possible, I believe, by any legitimate authority possessed within

the limits of that island to get £800 by a vote from the mixed legislative body which is invested with authority in Malta. And the result was this—they resorted to a little separate private repository; a little treasury within a treasury,<sup>1</sup> to which the Maltese Assembly had nothing to say. Within that treasury there was a sum deposited of £1000 annually. This, I have no doubt, was for a special purpose. Out of that £1000, not by a liberal appeal to the British House of Commons, not by a liberal appeal to the legislative body in Malta, but by the discretion of the House of Commons, that money—taken from the pocket of the British taxpayer—has been subscribed. That seems to me a very strange, a very unconstitutional, and, I should say, a very un-English proceeding. There are a number of other questions which it is really not possible satisfactorily to investigate, but one of them is this. There is a great deal more in these papers—which are of much interest—about an engagement that the Pope is never to appoint an archbishop in Malta, or a bishop in the dependent island of Gozo, without previous communication with the British Government; and, in fact, the language goes so far as to seem to imply that he will not appoint any one except those that the British Government approves. Well, I am not at all sure that the British Government—when I consider what the British Government commonly is—I do not mean what it is at this moment, I am not at all sure that we are the best judges of the men fittest to set over the consciences of Roman Catholics. But that is not the question. There are two Roman Catholic Bishops in Malta, but are they the only two Roman Catholic Bishops in the Queen's dominions? No, I should think we have at least a hundred of them, if we go through the Queen's dominions. Are we to become responsible for the choice of those hundred Bishops? Why not, if we are to become judges of two? It looks as if the matter is intended to spread a great deal further, and I will come to what I believe to be the key to the whole mischief.

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Fergusson, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, said in the House of Commons, on August 11, 1890, "It was a charge upon the revenues of Malta. In the Constitution Act there was a sum of £1000 reserved for special purposes at the discretion of the Secretary of State."

What is all this meddling in Malta? What is this embassy to the Pope? We hear about the burial of the dead in churches, as if the rural districts in Malta were attached to the practice of burying the dead in churches. Is that a matter which makes it necessary to send an Envoy, an Envoy Extraordinary? Is it necessary to send an embassy to the Pope for the purpose of settling whether the dead shall be buried in the rural districts of Malta within the walls of the churches or beyond the walls of the churches? No. You have seen an arrangement lately given to the world, and one which is now going to receive its Parliamentary consummation, in which Heligoland is set off against Africa. That is a good distance to bring about an exchange. It reminds one of the proposal to bring the product of the Arctic Circle to the Antarctic Circle; and now you give away Heligoland, in order to get authority and recognition, so far as European Powers are concerned, on some part of the coast of Africa. It appears to me that there is a parallel to that interchange between Heligoland and Africa. There is another interchange, of which I get a glimpse in these papers, between Malta and Ireland. The real secret of this operation I give you, not from any knowledge, but from my own observation and conviction. You may think of it what you please. Any one is at liberty to dispute it if he likes; but it is this. The Pope was induced about eighteen months ago, I think, to fulminate what was called a rescript against the Nationalists of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> He thereby, in my opinion, at great cost to his own influence within the legitimate sphere of purely spiritual authority—at very great cost, damage, and detriment to himself, undoubtedly did his utmost to prop up a labouring and failing cause—namely, that of the anti-Irish party in this country. That was a great step on the part of the Pope. Did it not demand a return? You have got the return before you. The return is by sending somebody whom you call an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Pope. You go as near as you can to a declaration that the Pope is still a temporal prince; that, being a temporal prince, he has the right,

<sup>1</sup> Promulgated in August 1868 against the "Plan of Campaign."

though not the fact, of temporal dominion. But, with regard to Italy, and the nationality of Italy, they must shift for themselves.

That appears to me the nature of this transaction. It is a very strange one. For, whom has it pleased? It has not pleased the Maltese clergy, who are, unjustly I believe, abused right and left for their ignorance and incompetence. It has not pleased the Maltese people, because the legislative body in Malta has shown a most determined aversion to the whole affair, and exhibited so much opposition, that it has been found necessary to prorogue it altogether, and let its proceedings be postponed for several months. It has certainly not pleased the people of England, who do not want to see the ancient principles by which they have been enabled to avoid these direct relations with the Court of Rome—not merely these direct relations, but, these concessions of a right to govern in purely British concerns—subverted. Has it pleased the people of Ireland? On the contrary, from the conduct of the Irish Members, you see they put on this group of proceedings the same construction which I have felt it my duty to lay before you. They feel that Ireland is being given up as against Malta on this occasion for the purpose of giving the Court of Rome an equivalent for the favour they did to her Majesty's ministers eighteen months ago. Everybody concerned in this affair is full of suspicion and doubt, of indignation even, in some cases approaching to disgust. It is a transaction simply between her Majesty's Government in this country and the Pope and his advisers at Rome, supposed to be for the benefit of those most important parties, but entered into without consulting the inclinations and interests of all the rest of mankind. It is a very strange proceeding, on which, I think, the public mind should be roused and directed to an attitude of vigilance. We shall hear more about this, depend upon it. You can afford to wait. Next time you see the question turn up, follow it through its details; and though the scale is small, the considerations touched and the questions raised are of the utmost interest and of the highest importance.



But there is another question upon which I feel it necessary to trouble you. And it is quite as singular as the one which I have just been touching upon. It is a declaration from the judicial bench by a judge in Ireland. Not from one of those whom we irreverently sometimes call a "removable." They are a class which have a stamp set upon them in consequence of the events of the last four years that is not likely to be easily effaced. No; it is from a Judge of the High Court of Ireland, a Court adorned by many men of great ability, high impartiality, great learning, and with qualities that make a judge honourable and venerable. And I believe that the gentleman who is considered as the delinquent on this particular occasion is a gentleman of perfect integrity, and even of sturdy integrity, who values his own honour, and who would knowingly do nothing wrong. No; to Mr Justice Harrison I give that credit. I am not going to say a word about his character or motives; but I am going to say a word about the words he used, the natural effect of those words, and the example he set to the people of Ireland and to the nation of Ireland, and the consequences that are likely to flow from such a proceeding.

On the 18th of July, I think, Judge Harrison used words to this effect. He was conducting, or about to conduct, the assizes in Galway. I will shorten the words he used. There is no dispute about them. He said that the county was in a very dreadful state. He went on to say, "Things here are such that why the people don't rise and use lynch law is a mystery to me. I am astonished they do not do so. If they did, I think it would be a happy day for the administration of the law." Now, gentlemen, those words are not ambiguous. If there is a phrase in politics well defined, it is the phrase "lynch law." And it is defined by two particulars. The first is that it exclusively refers to capital punishment. Lynch law does not condescend to imprisonment. It is not content with sending a Roman Catholic priest, because he has followed the feeling of his country, to prison for two or three months. No; it touches life. That is the first qualification of lynch law. What is the second? The second is this—that either lynch law is in a country outside of all law,

where there is no law at all, or, if there is a law, it is without the law and against the law. Apologies are made for it, no doubt, that sometimes it does the work of the law, in the same way as O'Connell once apologised, and courageously apologised, for a great many of the outrages in Ireland by saying it was the wild justice of the people that did them. But that is the character of lynch law. It is essentially a question of life; it is essentially anti-legal; and it is from a judge on the bench in Ireland, of all countries in the world—in Ireland, where you sometimes hear that Nationalists are impetuous and that Nationalists are intemperate—there it is that this example is set. But, gentlemen, I do not believe that the most vigilant search through the files of Irish newspapers for thirteen years could produce a declaration that has passed the lips of any Nationalist one-half as intemperate or one-tenth as dangerous as these words that have fallen from the lips of Judge Harrison.

Mr Dillon courageously took up the question in the House of Commons, and although I do not for a moment declare that that had anything to do with calling for a justification of anything said by Judge Harrison, he himself volunteered explanations. But his explanations came to this, that he meant nothing wrong; that he did not believe that he was understood to say anything wrong, and that he admitted this expression was "infelicitous." He has not expressed one syllable of regret for that expression. He said it was infelicitous, and just so any Fenian in Ireland might say, if he was so inclined, that his objects were honourable, that his aim was sacred, that it was the welfare, the liberty, the deliverance of his country, but that in the choice of the means he was infelicitous. But the infelicitous Fenian would be hanged notwithstanding his expression. That is the whole extent of the Judge's explanation. He does not say one word of his having committed an error; he does not desire to retract that expression. On the contrary, he adopts the high language of his position. I admit that by his astounding rashness he has placed himself in a position of great difficulty. That I do not deny. It is no easy matter for a judge to apologise and to say, "I have been wrong." But that is no

reason why wrong, and gross wrong, from a judge is to pass with impunity. Here is a case in which the minister, and organ of the law, sitting on the bench of justice, declares from that bench that the community ought to rise and administer lynch law, and we know what lynch law means. Well, I want to know what has happened in consequence. The main part of the Judge's apology is that he believes that the people who heard him understood him in a sense quite different from that which has been imputed to him. But there is no question of imputing in the phrase "lynch law." It has but one meaning. If it was put into the dictionary, I defy Dr Murray<sup>1</sup> or the ingenuity of the phalanx that follows him—great as their ingenuity and ability are—I defy him to give to lynch law any meaning but one. This gentleman said something has been imputed to him. He means this: "I said one thing, but I am perfectly confident everybody who heard me understood me to say another." Then he gives an explanation of what he really did mean. "My wish was that the people should have the moral courage openly to assert themselves against the system of intimidation and outrage prevailing." But, gentlemen, I should say a word in passing upon that system of outrage and intimidation. The Judge gives you to understand that there was something approaching anarchy in East Galway. Well, he spoke upon July 18, and we have only got the returns in the quarter up to June 30. Those returns I have examined, and in the whole of East Galway, which contains a large population, during the three months ending on June 30 there was a total of eight threatening letters and of six offences, but of those six offences not one was mentioned in the constabulary returns as an offence against life or against the person. That is the state of things down to June 30. Unless there has been some complete revolution between June 30 and July 18, of which I know nothing, that is the state of things which has led to this astounding declaration.

Now, gentlemen, I want to call your attention to what

<sup>1</sup> The editor of the new English Dictionary]

I think a very serious affair. Do not assume that because you are all Liberals, and because you hear so much said about the progress of democracy and the self-governing power of the people—do not assume that in all things you are going forwards and in nothing backwards. Here is the case of the condition of this self-governing people. A Judge has made this fearful declaration from the Bench. It is noticed in Parliament on the part of 300 members, or very nearly 300. The request is made to have a time to discuss that subject, and that request is refused, and the power of the Government to refuse it is undoubted. And if a motion were made—I am not sure whether the forms will permit us to make it—to take a day for the purpose of discussing it, 300 Tories and about 60 or 70 gentlemen who still call themselves Liberals would form a majority against us, so we should get nothing whatever by making such a motion, except giving colour to that charge of obstruction which, when they have nothing else whatever to plead, they always use to explain the present unprecedented state of things. So we are excluded from discussing this proceeding of the Judge.

Well, I sat in Parliament, I ought perhaps to be ashamed to say, in the year 1834; when the case of Mr Baron Smith, an Irish judge of great merit in many ways, was brought before the House of Commons; and the House of Commons, first of all, by a very large majority, appointed a committee to inquire into the case of Mr Baron Smith and the charges against him, and then by a very small majority rescinded that vote. But that is not the question. What I want to point out is the issue of the vote in the present House of Commons. We knew perfectly well what it would be if we had discussed it. We should have had an opportunity of discussing it, however, with fairness and freedom, when we could have stated what was to be stated on the side of the Irish nation, and where, on the other side, all that could be said on the part of Justice Harrison could be stated with equal freedom and force. In my opinion, the Government have acted very cruelly to Justice Harrison in not allowing him to be so discussed in the House of Commons. A wise

discretion, however, led them to a totally opposite conclusion. They have decided it, and we are shut out.

What was the case in 1834, to which I lead you back more than half a century, into the comparative darkness of the time of your forefathers? They had as good a Parliament as you had, and Parliaments in those days had a great deal more liberty than the Parliament that now prevails, and the Administration that is now in power. Judge Harrison is charged with using words which went directly to incite the ignorant and inflammable to the use of violence, to the destruction of life, without form of law or regard to justice. That is the charge in the case of Justice Harrison—not altogether unreasonable, although Judge Harrison says no one understood him in a dangerous sense. Here is an article from the *Dublin Evening Mail*, ridiculing the charges against him, and beginning by saying, “After all, what was there so shocking in what Judge Harrison is reported to have said?”—not in the least degree seeking to impose upon it another sense. That is the case of Judge Harrison. What was the case of Baron Smith, and what was the view taken by the House of Commons of that time? Baron Smith was charged with no offence against public order. Mr O’Connell made accusations against him, and they were two. First of all, he lay in bed too long in the morning, and came to Court too late. That was one of the objections, and the other objection was that he made foolish, intemperate, and mischievous party speeches from the bench. If Justice Harrison had thought fit to have selected for his animadversions a group of us who sit in Parliament who may not agree with his politics, who would have thought it needful to take notice of such things? But in 1834 those comparatively trifling charges were taken up and supported by a great authority, and though the House of Commons finally receded, it receded only by a majority of six, the numbers being, I think, 175 to 169.<sup>1</sup> Look what was said, and it is rather curious who said it. Baron Smith said that he

<sup>1</sup> The numbers, according to *Hansard* and *The Mirror of Parliament* (Feb. 21st), were 161 to 155; according to *The Annual Register*, 165 to 159.

never meant any mischief by what he said, and the man who put down that plea was the late Lord Derby, who was then Secretary for the Colonies in the Government of Lord Grey, and he spoke these words. He said: "I know not, and I care not, what are the motives of any man. The question which this House and the Government have to deal with is this—Is there any substantial ground made out for inquiry?" I do not charge Justice Harrison with having meant what he said. I believe he used his words in an absolute vacancy of mind. I do not think he had the slightest acquaintance with the meaning of his own language. All that I fully admit, and I believe in the innocency of his mind. But that has nothing whatever to do with the matter. The question is—What was the effect of those words? By far the greatest and most dreadful violations of the public peace that have taken place of late years in Ireland have not been in Roman Catholic Ireland. The Belfast riots<sup>1</sup> were far more shocking and destructive and guilty, and more frightful evidences of an excitable and perilous state of mind than any manifestation, even including those that have been culpable, and have taken place within a recent period, that has appeared from the quarter of Irish Nationalism. Yet these words were used by Mr Justice Harrison. The House of Commons, elected by nearly the universal suffrage of this country, has refused to allow all discussion of the subject, and the leader of the House has told us that Judge Harrison has afforded a full and free, and—although the word is not reported in *The Times* I heard it used—a perfectly satisfactory explanation. Now, I think that, although I had not intended to trouble you with it at all, this is a matter of sufficiently great importance. I do not mean in a party sense. But, even in a party sense, this is very good material for us to use, and we shall use it. We are bound to use it. We must use it. We have striven to produce the matter where Mr Justice Harrison could be defended by his friends, and we have been ignominiously refused. Three

<sup>1</sup> In June 1886

hundred members of the House of Commons have been refused and are tongue-tied,—and, using the word in its most literal sense—gagged in this matter. Ah! it is important that this should be worked out in the face of the country. What we want is one thing, and almost one thing alone, and that is to bring home to the mind of the individual voter a sense of his personal responsibility. I want to know whether the mass of the people approve of this; whether those working men who belong to Conservative Associations approve of it. I do not believe it. I believe that if you make these things known they will be condemned. It is our duty to make them known; to hold up to the public view proceedings so extraordinary. They form but a part: they form but one small chapter of a case enormously voluminous. But our duty and our business is to leave no part of that case unexamined; to exhaust the whole of the considerations that belong to it; to bring it fully into the light and into the glare of day, and then to abide by the dispassionate verdict of the country.

## IRELAND; THE LABOUR QUESTION

WEST CALDER, OCTOBER 23, 1890

In October Mr Gladstone undertook his third "Millothian Campaign." He addressed very large audiences, on the 21st at Edinburgh, the 23rd at West Calder, the 25th at Dalkeith, and the 27th at Edinburgh. At the West Calder meeting a large number of miners were present.

MR CHAIRMAN, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,—It is indeed most true, as your respected Chairman has informed us, that we look forward from the present moment into a future that is charged with interests and with expectations which may ripen into events almost beyond precedent or belief. The popular character which has been given to the institutions of this country has had, in my opinion, not so much an effect in putting forward any abstract theory of politics, whether democratic or other, as in developing and bringing into view a vast mass of public, social interests which belong to the course of modern civilisation. Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is not for me to speak of my part in giving form to such expectations, or in dealing with such interests, either in the past or in the future. I can hardly believe that the sentiment entertained of me reaches that point of elevation which has been described by the Chairman in his generous speech. At all events, I know that it goes far beyond what I am entitled to claim. I know also that it will be, as it has been, the greatest encouragement and incentive to me in struggling with the difficulties of my time of life, and in endeavouring to perform my public duties, during whatever time, short as it must necessarily be, may still be allotted to me for that purpose—with respect to the length or the shortness of which I feel naturally two things,—in the first place, that the determination of that question lies in better and wiser hands than mine; and, in the second place, that when



I cease to appear and to act upon the stage of public affairs, my place will be filled by other men, whom you will find not less willing, and I trust more competent, to meet the demand.

Well, now, gentlemen, your Chairman began with mentioning a subject in which I feel bound to follow him, because it is a highly instructive one, and it is the subject of the recent election at Eccles,<sup>1</sup> with regard to which the greater part of England and Scotland has, I believe, deprived itself of wholesome rest for a few hours last night, in the hope of hearing the result in figures, which at length happily arrived. Now, I refer to this subject, gentlemen, because I first wish to give you a piece of what may be to you information, but happens with me to depend upon personal knowledge, which, I think, will assist you in appreciating the event. We were blessed at Eccles with a good candidate,—with a very good candidate,—with a gentleman who has performed—although not in a position of great notoriety—who has performed very important services to the public on a particular Commission.<sup>2</sup> But the Tories had a candidate of the most extraordinary personal influence. Mr Egerton, whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for a long time, is an experienced public man. He has long sat in Parliament. He has held office under the Crown, and for many, many years,—belonging, as he does, to one of the most important and most respected and most powerful families in the whole of Lancashire—for many, many years he had the whole concerns of the great Bridgewater interest entirely in his own management. Gentlemen, you can judge how much such a character and such a position must have brought to the support of his party in the Eccles election, an influence altogether extraordinary, and I don't hesitate to say that if Mr Egerton has been defeated—as I am glad to say he has—by a majority of 200 votes, I think I am correct in saying that any other man—I care not who—that the Tories could possibly have produced, would have been defeated by twice, three times, or four times 200.

<sup>1</sup> The preceding day Mr Roby, the Liberal candidate, had been returned; the late member was a Conservative.

<sup>2</sup> The Endowed Schools Commission, 1869.

Well, now, gentlemen, Eccles is a unit. But I should like to look a little for a moment, if you will permit me, at the arithmetic of the question. I will be considerate in the use of figures, but I know you are very well up to them; and I wish to point out to you that upon the balance of seats in bye-elections, since about the close of the year 1886, when the hostile current ceased to flow, and when the returning tide—which is now passing onwards to the highest high-water mark—when that began, since that time we have gained upon the balance of contested elections no less than fourteen seats. Accompany me a little further, because these fourteen seats are all very well, but they do not dispose of the whole case. No, but we have gained these fourteen seats upon ninety-four elections. Now, I should like, if I were a schoolmaster, to put to the schoolboys this question—If the Liberal party has gained elections—did I say ninety-four?—ninety-six I ought to have said—If the Liberal party has gained in ninety-six elections a balance of fourteen seats, how many seats is it likely to gain when we come to have 670 elections?

Now, gentlemen, this is not putting the question in a way too favourable to ourselves. On the contrary, it is rather unfavourable to us, because it is a known fact among all the professors of electioneering craft that the Liberal party shows less well at bye-elections than it does at general elections, and for several reasons. In a general election the whole tide of national sympathy is flowing. Wherever that tide of national sympathy flows out large and freely, there the Liberal party prospers. But there are, gentlemen, as you know, what are called property votes—plural votes. In Scotland, I am sorry to say, you have known too much of them under the name of “faggot votes.” All these faggot voters during a general election are in this difficulty, that they cannot be in two, three, or four places at once, and therefore a number of the votes are lost. But in a bye-election not one is lost, the voters all come trooping up from the ends of the world for the purpose of giving their votes, and as I need not tell you that an overwhelming proportion of this section of public opinion is entirely in the Tory interest, you

may judge what disadvantage this inflicts upon the Liberals at bye-elections. However, I will not go any further with that subject. But you have all heard of the rule-of-three, and I propose something of the nature of the rule-of-three sum. You will find that the sum of 96 elections is as nearly as may be the one-seventh part of the figure 670; and you know, I daresay, that 670 is the number of the present House of Commons, and the number, therefore, of the elections that would have to be decided in a dissolution. Well, therefore, if you multiply 96 by 7, you get about 670. I want to get the fourth term of my rule-of-three, and in order to do that I must multiply 14 by 7, just as I multiply my 96 by 7. Multiplying 14 by 7, I find that if 96 elections yield a gain of 14 seats, on the same principle 670 elections will yield a gain of 98 seats.

I will not carry you much further. There is at present a majority of 80 against us in the House of Commons. You are aware that when we win one seat it is not a gain of one, but a gain of two, because we not only take him away from the other men, but we put him on our own side. Therefore, to ascertain the strength, you must double the sum of 98 votes, making a difference of 196 at a division, and deducting from that the present majority of 80, or the majority as it was at the beginning of Parliament, which would be safer—the majority as dependent upon the voices of the constituencies—which would make it, I think, 108,—you will find it impossible to make that calculation in any way that shall give us less than a majority of 80 or 90 seats in the new Parliament, which, for my part, I believe, is much more likely to be increased than to be diminished.

Well now, gentlemen, if I have referred to the Eccles election, it has not been in terms rhetorical, but I have endeavoured to treat it strictly as a matter of business,—that is the light in which I wish to look at it. But one word more I will say upon it. Is it not an extraordinary thing, when you consider what a bye-election is, that we should have had the Strand with crowds of people in it for hours after midnight last night, that the quiet of Rothesay Terrace in Edinburgh, where I am

enjoying the liberal hospitality of the present Dean of Faculty,<sup>1</sup> should be disturbed by numbers of people marching through the streets and cheering towards two o'clock in the morning, and that this should have been the case over all the country, not because we have had a dissolution and a general settlement of the question, but because in the district of Eccles in Lancashire, just the 670th part of the whole question had been settled. So small a fraction was sufficient, then, to excite England, Scotland, and Wales, and, I doubt not, Ireland too. Well, gentlemen, if so small a fraction can do so much, what it teaches you is how great is the question represented by the entire figure. It conveys this, that as bye-elections have never, in my recollection, from the time of the first Reform Act, been watched as they have been watched during the last four years, so there never has been a question which has so possessed the entire heart, and mind, and intelligence of the people, and with respect to which the entire nation is so well aware that on the solution of that question, more, at the present moment, than upon all the other questions put together, the welfare and the glory and the happiness of this country depend. So much for Eccles, gentlemen.

And now I will not say much to-day about Ireland; because, although that is a very great question, and the greatest by far of all questions, I have already had an opportunity of speaking upon it at length in Edinburgh, and I may have an opportunity of referring to it again. Still, I want to say one word upon one particular point, and it is this—because it is a matter of great interest. Our friends—by which I mean our opponents—I always like, if possible, to look upon them as friends, for some of them, I am very glad to say, are my friends; but be they friends or be they opponents, they have pursued a very peculiar course in regard to the nomenclature of party—the names that they have given, and the names that they have taken—and I complain a good deal of them in that respect.

In the first place, they call us Separatists. I have complained

<sup>1</sup> Mr J. B. Balfour.

before, and I complain again, of that term. I complain of it, because, by fixing upon us that name, they fix upon us the intention which they know just as well as we ourselves know, from the bottom of our hearts we detest and abhor. Well, gentlemen, that is not fair play in politics. During the course of a long life, I have heard men called Conservatives or Tories, and I have heard men called Liberals, or Whigs, or Radicals, and I have heard men called Repealers, and with these terms as the political currency we got on very well. There is not one of these terms which implies anything painful, anything shameful, anything that can wound the feelings of any man. But these people with whom we are now contending are the same people, but they are in a worse humour, and they have called us Separatists. I cannot say, gentlemen, that I suffer greatly myself. If they can invent a worse name—well, I shall suffer perhaps still less. What I want to point out is this—to use names of that kind is a barbarising practice, which is contrary to fair play. It is like the man who, in a boxing or pugilistic contest, strikes below the belt; and what makes it, gentlemen, more extraordinary is this, that we are often informed by our antagonists, and so often that one would suppose they might be speaking the truth—we are constantly informed by them—Professor Tyndall<sup>1</sup> and others—that all the education, all the culture, and all the talent of the country, is on their side. Then, I am afraid, if the education, and the culture, and the talent of the country are obliged to resort to these uncivilised tricks for the purpose of carrying on their warfare, there is one small consolation that remains to us, gentlemen, and that is, that though we have neither education, nor culture, nor talent, but are a set of stupid boys that are always at the bottom of the class, yet this one consolation remains to us—let us show that we have got better manners than they.

They are more considerate in the name which they assign to themselves, namely, the name of Unionists. And upon that subject I totally deny their title to it. But, at the same time,

A distinguished scientific man who was prominent in opposition to the Home Rule cause.

I wish that that should be made a matter of fair argument, and I therefore propose—for it is an interesting question which bears upon the history of things—really to bring out the merits and important parts of the case.

What is a Unionist? Now, there is a fair question. And in my opinion, gentlemen, a Unionist is, in the first place, a man who, if you talk to him about uniting the hearts of a people, about uniting the wills of a people, about uniting the intelligence of a people, looks upon you as a dreamer and a fool. He has no faith in these matters at all. He does not believe in them. There is no such thing in human kind as heart, as will, as intelligence. What is really the only instrument for dealing with mankind is the coercive obligations of an Act of Parliament. There you have got something that you can rely upon. Well, now, that is the first idea I have of a Unionist. I will give you an illustration which is historical, but I think it is not without interest—it is quite recent. When the Austrian Empire held, not very many years ago, a large portion of Italy, it held that portion of Italy mainly by means of four great fortresses of the first class, with the names of which I need not trouble you. But they were always called by the collective name as “the Quadrilateral.” When the Austrians were told they ought to give up that country, in the interests of Italy, and in their own interests, their partisans—the same kind of people that we have now got to deal with—said, “Oh, no; it was impossible, because their Empire would lose its whole security, and go utterly to the dogs, if they did not keep the Quadrilateral.” If you talked to them about the advantage of having good and affectionate relations with Italy, they laughed at you, exactly in the same way as our opponents laugh, and jeer, and scoff at us, when we talk about the advantage of an union of hearts with Ireland. And so they held as long as they could to their Quadrilateral. But, in the mercy of Providence, there came upon them a war,<sup>1</sup> which turned them out of their Quadrilateral, and the Quadrilateral

<sup>1</sup> In 1866.

became a part of the Italian Kingdom, which is now entire from the Alps to the southern promontories of the country. But what has happened? These Italians whom Austria strove to trample down by its Quadrilateral—and every one of whom hated Austria in those days from the bottom of his soul—the country peopled by these Italians has now—whether wisely or unwisely it is not for me now to say—entered into a treaty called the Triple Alliance,<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of maintaining the Austrian Empire. Not for that sole purpose, but partly for that purpose. Such is the wisdom of people who trust in bricks and mortar, stone, cement, and “quadrilaterals,” and have no faith in human hearts and human understanding. That is one idea of a Unionist; I am sorry to say I do not think it is a very elevating one.

I want to go closer to the question, and see what this means as applied to the Irish question. When you hear these gentlemen saying what they have been doing—what a glorious battle they have been fighting for maintaining the Union—that they have fought this battle for four hundred years against the overwhelming force of a small minority—and when out of this they try to make great hectoring speeches—well, you would suppose there had been some body of politicians in the House of Commons who were endeavouring to repeal the Union. But there is nobody endeavouring to repeal the Union—not a man is endeavouring to repeal the Union; and this, gentlemen, is not a question of rhetoric, or a question of invective, or apology, but a question of history, and a question of fact.

What, gentlemen, is the Act of Union,<sup>2</sup> and what does the Act of Union prescribe? I will tell you in a very few words. Its prescriptions are mainly three. Before the Act of Union, Ireland was a sovereign country, and the Parliament of England and Scotland had no more power or title to constrain or trespass upon the Parliament of Ireland than it had to trample upon the Congress of America. Now, that is a matter of fact. Ireland was before the Union an independent kingdom. To that

<sup>1</sup> October 1887.

<sup>2</sup> July 1800.

independence the Union put an end. That was the first, and by far the greater, enactment of the Act of Union. That, I need not tell you, is an enactment which no man, English or Irish, in Parliament seeks to disturb. It is an enactment which every man, and certainly every man of the party with which I have the honour to be connected, is bound to maintain.

The second great branch of the Act of Union was that which gave representation to Ireland at Westminster. Now, gentlemen, it is very well known that, although we saw great difficulties attaching practically to any plan for the purpose, and although we knew very well that no vital want had occurred before the Act of Union, in consequence of the fact that there were no representatives of Ireland at Westminster, yet in respect to the public opinion of the country, and believing the public opinion of the country to be to this effect, that there ought to be representation of Ireland at Westminster, we agreed to give effect to the public wish. There is no question at all before us of removing from Westminster the representation—I don't now speak about its particular form or conditions, that is for discussion at another time—the representation at Westminster.

What do you think was the third great enactment of the Act of Union? The third great enactment of the Act of Union was this, that what was called the Protestant Church of the country, which was the Church of all the peers and all the squires, and none of the people, should be maintained as the Established Church of the country for ever and ever, and the maintenance of it in that character should be this—I think the words used were—“should be an essential and fundamental part of the Act of Union.” What has become of that third great division of the Act of Union? Why, gentlemen, it has gone to the dogs. It does not exist. There is no Established Church at all in Ireland; and Ireland, I believe, if you ask the whole of her people, and undoubtedly if you ask the laity belonging to that Established Church, all of them will say that they are a great deal better without it than they were with it. That portion of the Act of Union has gone, and that part was “essen-



tial and fundamental"! Lord Cairns,<sup>1</sup> when we disestablished the Irish Church, made a masterly argument to show that, if you have got a deed or a document in which there is a particular condition described in the deed and document itself to be essential and fundamental, and you violate that condition, the whole thing comes to the ground; and therefore, according to Lord Cairns and his party—for he spoke on behalf of the Tory party, and was a most powerful and able man—according to Lord Cairns and his party, the Act of Union is gone already.

But, ladies and gentlemen, I think that Lord Cairns pushed the matter rather far, because I look upon it as being a very great and important reality, and I believe—and I think that Ireland believes—that it is much better that the Act of Union should not be destroyed. The Act of Union was carried by means so indescribably foul and vile that it can have no moral title for existence whatever, from any of the circumstances out of which it sprang. But it was a very great Act. It produced enormous results. The Irish, with O'Connell at their head, under a just and natural indignation at the manner in which they had been represented by their national representatives, called for the repeal of the Act of Union; but reflection taught them better, and in the year 1845 a gentleman named Dillon, the highly-respected father of a highly-respected son, who now sits in Parliament, and who enjoyed the confidence of his country, wrote to the Duke of Wellington on the subject of Irish Government in 1845. At that time considering the matter among themselves, a large body of them came to this conclusion, that it was not necessary for them to ask for the repeal of the Act of Union, but that it was necessary to have a local Parliament invested with authority to deal with the whole of Ireland's internal concerns, and that then it might be wise, and would be wise, to have an Imperial Parliament at Westminster to deal with the affairs of the Empire; and Mr Dillon wrote in these terms to the Duke of Wellington in a sentence or two that I will read to you. They are not long, and they are really well

<sup>1</sup> The Lord Chancellor of Mr Disraeli's Administration, 1868.

worth your hearing. "I do not seek," he said, "the raw repeal of the Act of Union." This is published in his Life. "I do not seek the raw repeal of the Act of Union. I want you to retain the Imperial Parliament with its Imperial powers. I ask you only to disencumber it of those cases which exhaust its patience, and which embarrass its attention. I ask you," he goes on, "to give to Ireland"—I beg pardon, I have made a mistake—it is totally immaterial—my friend Mr Campbell reminds me that it was not the Mr Dillon of that day who wrote it; it was his friend and coadjutor, Mr Davis, a man not less famous in the history of Ireland, and no less possessed of the confidence of his fellow-countrymen; and therefore it is a formal mistake of the name that I wish to correct, and then he said—he used the words that I have described, and went on to say, "It is not impossible to combine Irish legislature for local purposes with the integrity and foreign importance of the Empire. A local Parliament granted so, and in a kindly and candid spirit, would be fairly accepted, and would conciliate that large and varied body, which, from wisdom, or want, or patriotism, or ambition, are intolerant of having their local laws made, and their local offices filled by Englishmen."

I am not now entering into doubtful and disputable argument, but am pointing out to you that this name of Unionist, rather craftily assumed by our antagonists, is a sheer blunder, and could not possibly have been assumed by them, but for one great characteristic, which they undoubtedly possess, and are determined to maintain, and that is entire and absolute historical ignorance. No, gentlemen, whatever the Act of Union was in its origin, we propose to retain it. We propose to retain it with the assent of Ireland, the assent given by its eighty-five Nationalist members, an assent expressly given ever since the year 1885 by Mr Parnell at their head. What we propose is a vast and effective delegation or devolution, which shall, as Mr Davis well says, rid the Imperial Parliament of a vast mass of work, of contentious work, which prevents it from doing the business of England and Scotland, and which, while restoring to England and Scotland the true liberty of their Parliamentary life, and a

decent rapidity in the movement of public legislation, shall at the same time give contentment, peace, happiness, and loyalty to Ireland.

Gentlemen, I will not trouble you further to-day with the history of Ireland, because I consider that is not the purpose I came here for to-day. I knew I was coming into a centre of the mining population of the county, and it appeared to me, therefore, to be a most appropriate opportunity for inviting you to consider with me the most important questions which are now raised in the form of legislative proposals, and in the form of many facts and circumstances which, to the careful observer, have an infinitely larger, wider, and more comprehensive character than any party legislative proposal, in respect to the condition of the labouring population of this country, and its prospects and its interests. This is indeed a matter of the deepest interest. On various occasions, various persons have of late pointed out the immense change which has taken place in the position of the labouring people of this country. Gentlemen, I have been a witness of that change. I have seen them in the depth of their depression, and I am in a better condition than younger men to measure the enormous amount of true, real, substantial progress that has been made. I don't hesitate to say, gentlemen, that at the close of the great war, we heard of nothing from what were deemed to be the organs of public opinion—that is, from the limited and enslaved press of the day—we heard of nothing but the military glory of England and the ascendancy which she had acquired in European counsels. Yes, but in acquiring that ascendancy, and in emblazoning that glory on her shield, she not only had pledged the resources of her future in a pecuniary form to a degree that threatened it with absolute ruin, but she had reduced the masses of her population to a state of degradation and a state of want which were enough to put in question and to compromise all the fame that all her triumphs, whether in the field of battle or upon the field of political liberty, had been able to secure for her. It was a dreadful state of things.

Now, gentlemen, what have been the heads of that change

briefly enumerated? In Scotland there was no such thing from one end of the country to the other as a labouring man with a vote—absolutely, I believe, I am correct in saying, no such thing as any man below the degree of a shopkeeper who had a vote in any shape whatever. Their institutions were a mockery, their representatives were the slaves, the willing slaves, of the Government of the day. They were often returned to Parliament after a contest by a number of votes you could count upon your fingers. I remember reading of a sharp contest for the county of Inverness, where there were three candidates,<sup>1</sup> and the winning candidate was returned, because he stood at the top of the poll, and he stood at the top of the poll because he had been so happy as to obtain fifteen votes, whereas his luckless opponents had, I think, only respectively got eleven and six. Well, gentlemen, we have not absolutely given to every head of a family a vote, but we have come extremely near it. We have given it, I think, to almost six millions of people in the country, and we are ready—as, I trust, we of the Liberal party are ready, when we get rid of this majority that terms itself Unionist—we are ready to go on a little further, and by the amendment of registration and by the abolition of these faggot and plurality votes, to lay down the principle, and give effect to the principle, of what is called succinctly One Man One Vote. Gentlemen, having done that, security in the exercise of that valuable suffrage has been attained by the ballot.

I must own that the state of the law is not quite satisfactory to me in one particular, and that is the continued operation of what is called the Septennial Act. The effect of that Septennial Act is what we now see and may continue to see for a couple of years more; indeed, they threaten us with the year 1893, but at any rate for some considerable time we may continue to see what we see now, viz., a sham majority in Westminster, passing laws and giving votes, which I won't say they know—that would be too heavy a charge against them, and I call in upon their behalf that which I believe theologians call

<sup>1</sup> In 1802.

“invincible ignorance”—but what we know, at any rate, to be votes, and to be laws, and a whole system of policy, totally opposed to the convictions of the people. But, gentlemen, it is certainly, as I know very well, one of the aspirations of the Liberal party to shorten that term, and thereby increase the popular control over their representatives in the House of Commons; and here I have got a small piece of advice to give you, not at all a bad test question to put to a Tory candidate, for I understand that you are to have a Tory candidate. I have been culpably neglectful in informing myself about him. I believe him to be a very respectable man. I know nothing about his movements, nothing of his intentions. I think I know something of his prospects. When a gentleman of that political colour comes down to West Calder and asks any of you for your votes, I advise you to book him if you can for the repeal of the Septennial Act and for the establishment of shorter Parliaments.

I go on to other questions, because my subject at present is the immeasurable change effected in the condition of the working men of this country—of the average working man of the average position—reaching upwards to those of the very highest skilled labourer, and reaching downwards to those whose labour is almost purely mechanical. I have spoken of the immense political change, but there are other changes, if possible, greater. The working man is now educated, and in that respect I admit that in Scotland he was largely educated even at the time to which I refer, though not so well as now. He is now generally educated throughout the whole island. He has now, besides the possession of education, free access to knowledge. Knowledge is untaxed. That is one of the battles fought and won for you by the Liberals of this country. Besides the access to knowledge, he has obtained through the labours of Liberals and Tories—who for supporting it were proscribed and ejected from their party—the blessing of freedom of trade; and that freedom of trade, won by twenty years of hard Parliamentary work, has added upon the average 50 per cent. at least—with perhaps, I admit,

some assistance from railways and from telegraphs—has added upon the average at least 50 per cent. to the available means and available comforts of the working population of this country.

But there is one thing, gentlemen, more important, I think, than any of these, and it was the earliest of all the triumphs won on behalf of the working men, and that was the power of free combination. When I was a child, if a small body of working men consulted together, and combined together, and jointly refused to work for a particular individual, unless he would give them such and such wages, that was an offence punishable at law; and to a Scotsman, gentlemen,—to a Scotsman,—you owe the repeal of that abominable state of law, and the establishment of freedom to combine—I mean to Joseph Hume.<sup>1</sup> It is an immense debt that you owe to that most worthy, distinguished, and excellent member of Parliament, in that and in a hundred other particulars. And that freedom of combination, naturally, when it was first given, was not so perfectly effective. The ingenuity of lawyers and of judges, not corrupt, but under bias, set to work to limit it as far as possible; but within the last few years the whole operations of the working classes, combined together in their particular trades unions, have been set entirely free from interference of any kind, so long as they kept within the limits of the law, and abstain from violence, which, whether in England or in Ireland, is and ought to be everywhere punished and put down.

Well, gentlemen, I have stated these things shortly, but if you put them together, they describe a change which is not only great, but which I have not exaggerated in terming an immeasurable change. Now this question is a question of extreme interest. I admit that in the beginning of this speech I was upon ground purely controversial and polemical. I am not ashamed of going upon that ground, if I am conscious that I am endeavouring to speak, as far as human infirmity will

<sup>1</sup> In 1842.

permit, the language of truth and justice. But it is a relief and a satisfaction to get off that ground for a little while, and in contemplating this enormously changed position of the labouring man as such—that is to say, of the great mass of the nation—I feel myself lifted, as it were, into a purer air, and engaged in a survey of a much wider and more attractive landscape. This, gentlemen, is a marvellous change. It is not uncommonly described in the language which I think was first used by Lord Salisbury, when he said that the labouring men were our masters. You are our masters. Now, gentlemen, what I wish above all things is to be true, and therefore I wish to say to you that in my deep, in my firm conviction, that statement is subject to very great qualification. You are our masters, and you are not. You are the majority of the voters of this country. I am speaking of myself as a non-labouring man for convenience' sake, but I hope that I am a labouring man myself, and I hope so to continue. Now, you understand my meaning. You have the majority of the votes in the constituencies, and undoubtedly, when the population of the country is fairly roused upon a given question—when it has given evidence of its deliberations by uniting itself into something like an unanimous mass, or into a mass with a great predominance of some opinion and conviction—that opinion and conviction are sure to prevail, and they will prevail, in spite of the resistance which may be offered to them for a time by the privileged classes. So far, gentlemen, you are the masters. It is a novelty, and it is a great novelty, a fruitful novelty, and a novelty leading to much interesting reflection. But that is upon a particular occasion, upon the occasion of some question that has assumed such magnitude in the public eye, that it has for the time eclipsed almost everything else, and attracted to itself almost a monopoly of the thought, the care, and the sentiment of the country. You see these are conditions which cannot be had every day. There are a hundred questions at a time calling for the attention of Parliament, and it is perhaps on only one of these questions, and very often on none of them, that the sort of union of public senti-

ment which I have endeavoured to describe can possibly be brought to prevail. Well, gentlemen, although you may be the masters in respect of particular measures passed through Parliament under these particular circumstances, yet it is almost an impossibility, when we consider the conditions of human life, tied down to labour—not merely manual labour, but mechanical and mental labour—tied down to labour, and not invested largely with leisure—it is impossible that the mind of the country can always be alive to questions of great importance in such a way as to be thoroughly exercised upon them all, and to arrive, in respect to them, at a deliberate, general, and solid conviction. And so I do not use that expression without large qualification. But at the same time it is a very important fact, that whereas the labouring man as such was formerly far weaker than the capitalist, and the mass of the labouring men, even when permitted to combine, could do very little in the face of the capitalist, the labouring men as a class are now rapidly approaching to a footing of full equality with the capitalist, and it is even possible that they may become the stronger of the two.

Well, now, gentlemen, I don't know whether that is likely to happen, but I wish to speak to you language, which, if not my position, yet my age, perhaps, may do something to justify. I do not wish, gentlemen, to be your flatterer. That is the worst service I could do to you, and that is the greatest disgrace I could inflict upon myself. Now, if we look back over the controverted questions of the last fifty or sixty years, the great changes which have taken place on the statute-book, and other great changes which have made themselves felt in other ways—if we look back over these things, we find that upon most of those questions in the past, the judgment of the labouring population of this country has been far more just, equitable, and enlightened than the judgment of the educated classes. Of this there is no doubt at all. I might quote a hundred instances of it. I will only refer for a moment to one instance, and it is the judgment of the operatives of Lancashire with regard to the great war in America, when, although that war took the bread



out of their mouths, and brought the independent and well-to-do labourer down very nearly to starvation, yet not one of them could be found to lift a hand in the cause which they thought was the cause of slavery as against the cause of freedom. Well, now, gentlemen, there is a great anomaly and paradox. You cannot deny that education and leisure are very great advantages for forming a sound judgment upon public questions. How, then, does it come—if it be a truth, as I believe it to be a truth—how did it come that the sounder judgments you have formed have been formed by those who had, so to speak, neither education nor leisure, and that the unsound judgments were formed by those whom Professor Tyndall now lauds to the skies? Ah! gentlemen, it was this—temptation led them astray. Bias, worldly considerations, selfish interests, and class interests led them astray. Gentlemen, the true test of a man, and the true test of a class, and the true test of a people, is power. It is a small thing as long as he has not power—as long as temptation is kept out of his way—that he should be tolerably just in his judgments; but it is when power has come into his hands that his trial comes—power which corrupted the judgments of the leisured and the wealthy classes may corrupt the judgments of the people. You will have temptation near you, gentlemen; you—the labouring people of this country—when you become supreme to such a degree that there is no other power to balance and counteract the power which you possess. You have approaching you, together with great physical, social, and political advantages—you have approaching you a deep and searching moral trial—you have to preserve the balance of your mind and your character, and even if you become, and when you have become, stronger than the capitalist, stronger than the peerage, stronger than the landed gentry, stronger than the great mercantile class—when you have become in one sense their political master, you have still before you one achievement to fulfil, one glory to attain, and appropriate to yourselves—continue to be just. I am bound to say I have seen no serious tendency to alarm me upon that subject as yet; I venture to give that warning for the future; it applies to the coming days

more than to the days that are past, and I hope that the mass of this meeting will live into these days in increasing prosperity and happiness, and if they do so, I am sure they will remember with kindness what was at all events a well-meant suggestion.

Gentlemen, I am getting on, and I come to the question which many of us have been thinking of, and must think of, and shall have to think of more. I get down again upon ground of practical and definite propositions, though not upon the ground of party contentions. I refer to what is much spoken of, here and elsewhere, as the Eight Hours' Bill—that, I believe, has a great and just interest for you. There is one warning I would venture to give in regard to the Eight Hours' Bill. I understand, from a well-informed quarter, that in one particular coal-pit in this county—the Rosewell Pit—there is a state of arrangements which causes a sense of dissatisfaction, of great and keen dissatisfaction, and which rather tends to accentuate and sharpen a desire for the enactment of an Eight Hours' Bill, which, it is thought, would remove a grievance that is believed to exist in that pit. I do not intend, and it would be absurd, on my part to attempt to discuss the question of that pit in full; all I will say about it is, as I know that the case of that pit has so far been referred to the consideration of the Home Secretary of State, and, as I understand that it is in his power, under the present law, to deal with it, I shall only say that, as far as I can judge, it appears to me that there has been good ground for calling in whatever aid he could give, with respect to the state of affairs that prevails there. I don't give any opinion upon the conduct of the gentleman—I believe a very able gentleman—who has the management of the concern; but I only state my own opinion to that extent. I mention it chiefly for the sake of this. We must always be upon our guard against the temptation to decide outside questions of immense breadth and comprehensiveness upon the ground of narrow and isolated instances. For if we do that, we may inflict evils ten times greater than those which we hope and which we desire to cure.

Well, now, gentlemen, the question of the Eight Hours' Bill arises in two forms—one of them a Bill for restricting labour

generally to eight hours, and the other for restricting labour in mines to eight hours. With respect to the Bill for restricting labour generally to eight hours, I shall only say that I do not, and will not, give such a Bill as that, however long I may live, any consideration until I see the Bill in print before me, for I have very great doubts whether a man could put such a Bill into print. It would be a very hard task, indeed, and I dismiss that—notwithstanding the recent vote given at Liverpool<sup>1</sup> at a meeting of Trades Unions, I dismiss that—from present consideration. So far as I may be concerned, I do not see my way even to consider it.

The Eight Hours' Miners' Bill is undoubtedly on a different footing. First of all, the nature of the employment is so different; and, gentlemen, though I am not a miner, I have been in a coal-pit a sufficient number of times to have the feeling which it seems to me that every man who has been there must entertain—that eight hours out of every twenty-four are quite enough for any human being to labour under these conditions. The separateness of the labour, the manner in which the men are brought together, the manner in which on that account a strong feeling of class comes to unite them, so that they become a distinct community as it were on the face of the world, is a highly distinctive feature in the case of the miner with respect to the Eight Hours' Bill. And, gentlemen, I make another admission, which is this—that our legislation with regard to factories, even although we profess to have founded it, and have founded it as to the letter for the case of women, and particularly for the case of children; yet, practically, it has been legislation which has embraced the case of men, and therefore I hold that this business of the Eight Hours' Bill for miners is a matter perfectly open for free and unprejudiced consideration. My duty upon the question I consider to be bounded by that. I think it right that I should preserve an open mind, that I should come to the consideration of the question without prejudice, and with a

<sup>1</sup> At the Trades Union Congress held in August 1890 it was voted by 193 to 155 that Parliament should be asked to fix an eight hours' day, or a week of forty-eight hours, for all trades alike.

fair and honest disposition to look at the matter from this point or that point which bears upon it, irrespective of any wish or predisposition of my own, and with a view of coming to what is right and just to all parties.

Now I would just point out several matters that appear to me to bear on the question in a very important way. In the first place, I am under the impression at the present moment, that although there may be a very considerable degree of union of opinion among the miners of particular districts in the country with regard to the Eight Hours' Bill, yet we are very far indeed from the time when there is any sort of approach to unanimity among the miners throughout the country, speaking of them as an entire body. And undoubtedly one of the conditions which is absolutely necessary before you could for a moment think of a measure which may in certain cases interfere with individual freedom, and may require very judicious treatment to accommodate it to the possible exigencies of trade, would be that the strong, solid, permanent convictions of the miners as a class should be declared, and until they are so declared, you are hardly in a condition to press the adoption of such a measure in a peremptory way.

Well, gentlemen, that is not quite all. Of course, there is this to be borne in mind, that all classes of producers may fall into habits and a state of mind which belong to classes. I have been one of those who have been censured for talking about the classes and the masses. But, gentlemen, it is not possible to do one's duty in political life without saying some things that are disagreeable, and it is necessary occasionally to draw those distinctions between the classes and the masses, because, wherever there is a class, there grows up necessarily more or less of a disposition to prefer the interest of that class to the interest of the public. Well, now, when we speak of the labouring people as a whole, we speak really, gentlemen, in the main, of the nation, and it is very fair to speak of the masses, and distinguish them from the classes. But when we come to deal with the particular classes—when the labouring men, according to their several employments, break themselves up

into this body, and that body, and the other body, and propose this or that in relation to themselves—why, then, undoubtedly the labouring men here become a class, and may come to be enamoured more or less of separate interests of their own, adverse to the interests of the public. They must be content to have their class interests, whatever they are, judged of in the light of the public interests.

I am perfectly certain you will owe me no grudge for speaking freely such sentiments in your presence. But there is another consideration that to my mind is more important yet, and it is this—I like to look at the instruments which labour possesses for the purpose of carrying forward its competition with capital. I say, gentlemen, its competition with capital, not its conflict with capital; I think the word “conflict,” which one might be tempted to use, conveys an untrue impression. Labour and capital are in some respects opposed to one another, that is, they are partially opposed as to the division of the profits of production, but they are essentially and profoundly allied. I think it is very just to compare them to two people rowing in a boat. One has an oar on each side. Now, you know, gentlemen, that when a boat is propelled in that manner, a portion of the force of each is lost in lateral pressure, but the bulk of the force of each is combined, and sends the boat on its course. That is the case of labour and capital. They may have separate interests, yet their separate interests are less by far in the long run; they are essentially allied, and their separate interests are little as compared with those in which they are united. But, still, I am the first to admit and to contend that labour has an interest distinct from that of capital, and that it is the duty of the labouring man, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of his wife and of his children—it is the duty of the labouring man to see that in that competition with capital, labour gets nothing less than justice. I go so far as this, gentlemen, that down to the present time, wherever the competition has existed, where it has gone to sharp issues, where there have been strikes on one side and lock-outs on the

other, I believe that in the main, and as a general rule, the labouring man has been in the right.

But what are the modes by which he should prosecute the attainment of the purposes he has in view? That is the only remaining point I wish to call your attention to. One of the most useful and valuable means of strengthening the position of the labouring class, without doing harm to any man, is what is called the method of co-operation. Co-operation, which is very largely applicable, and, I am happy to say, is very largely exercised and applied—I do not know if it is so here—throughout the country—co-operation in the distribution of commodities results in immense economy and immense benefit to the labouring man, and is likewise advantageous, because it helps to give him the practice of self-government on his own behalf and on behalf of his class. Co-operation, again, in the business of production is much more difficult, but if it can be managed it is better still, and most heartily wherever it can be had, either in manufacture or agriculture—wherever it can be had—I for one cordially wish it well. \* Co-operation is one of these methods.

Another of these methods is an Act of Parliament. Now, gentlemen, all I would say to you is, be slow to prefer methods which interfere with liberty to methods which promote liberty. An Act of Parliament comes chiefly into competition with the method of combination. The method of combination is now, I rejoice to think, in a great degree through the crowning efforts of my friends, Sir William Harcourt and Sir Henry James,<sup>1</sup>—that method of combination denied in great part to your Irish brethren and fellow-subjects as respects their vital and stable pursuit, namely, agriculture,—is perfectly free and open to you as regards your employments in manufacture, commerce, and trades of all descriptions. You have achieved by combination immense results. The system of combination is a sound system. There is no doubt that combination brings opposition, and may bring harshness to bear upon individuals, but that is a rare exception. I must look to the operation of it as a general rule, and I do not hesitate to say that the bulk of what the labouring

<sup>1</sup> Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act, 1875.

man has gained in his relations as representative of labour from the capitalist as representative of capital, the bulk of what he has gained he has gained by the use, and by the judicious use, of the power of combination.

Now, gentlemen, I own that I have considerable doubts as to what extent the method of an Act of Parliament and the method of combination will work together. I don't say they won't—these things are not to be judged of by abstract principles. They ought to be judged of by applying our common sense to understand and to measure the merits of each case as it arises; but this I do say, that if the labouring men of this country were to contract the habit, whenever there was a difficulty before them, of calling for an Act of Parliament to put it down, instead of endeavouring by free action among themselves, and by the operation of the healthy power of public opinion in the local communities—if they were to prefer the stark and rigid action of the sections in an Act of Parliament to that method of freedom of discussion,—that method of elasticity,—which permits errors to be corrected, and false steps to be retraced, they would seriously deteriorate the habits of their minds, and as freemen they would come to stand in a lower and not in a higher position than that which they had occupied before. It is in that spirit I should wish you to approach these questions. So far as it is in my power to give any advice upon them, I attach to freedom a value that I cannot describe. When people tell me that since I was a young man I have changed all my political opinions, I say, No, that is not true; I have not changed all my political opinions. I came into political life with a very considerable veneration for things ancient. I have still a very considerable veneration for things ancient. I dislike, I may almost say I detest, gratuitous change, and I would like to see that the men who propose a change are required to give a reason for that change. But, gentlemen, one great change I have made. I was educated and brought up not to know the value of liberty, and I have learned to value liberty. That is a great change. And I have learned to know that, although liberty may be misused and abused like every other blessing of Providence,

yet without liberty there is nothing sound, there is nothing healthy, there is nothing solid, there is nothing that can move onwards on the face of this earth. And I trust, gentlemen, that as part of the love of liberty is to love it on behalf of every other man, just as much as you love it yourselves, I trust that in considering labour questions you will always bear in mind that to resort to the coercive and rigid operation of public authority, though it may in certain cases be a necessity, is infinitely inferior—so long as you are not provoked to it by necessity—is infinitely inferior to doing your own work by yourselves and among yourselves,—to seeking strength by uniting yourselves hand to hand and shoulder to shoulder, and by so marching forward with the blessing of Providence to the attainment of every real, every social, every political, and every moral good. I thank you, gentlemen, for your attention.



## PUBLIC AFFAIRS

EDINBURGH, OCTOBER 27, 1890

In October Mr Gladstone undertook his third "Midlothian Campaign." He addressed very large audiences, on the 21st at Edinburgh, the 23rd at West Calder, the 25th at Dalkeith, and the 27th at Edinburgh. At the West Calder meeting a large number of miners were present.

MR COWAN, my Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—The duty incumbent upon me at this period of giving some account of the manner in which I have endeavoured to discharge the high trust committed to my hands is of necessity an arduous duty, but the kindness and affection with which I have been welcomed, and I must say the auspices under which I appear before you to-day, in the presence of our veteran leader of Liberalism, Mr Cowan, have converted that arduous duty into a lively pleasure. And I have nothing to apprehend except the danger that the too kindly and favourable estimate taken of my acts and words may perhaps have a tendency to relax the moral and intellectual fibre, and to make me less sensible than I ought to be of the serious nature of the struggle in which we are engaged.

Gentlemen, although I have trespassed very largely upon the attention of the constituency in the various meetings we have held, I regret to state that I have still a good deal to say. And, moreover, lapses of memory or accidental suggestions from one quarter or another raise new matter for consideration as we go along the path on which we have entered. One word I ought to say to-day—a very brief word—in order to repair a pure error of memory on my part.

I discussed pretty largely at Dalkeith on Saturday the important question of the Establishment or Disestablishment of the Scottish Church, but I omitted, through lapse of recollection, to refer to one portion of a speech<sup>1</sup> I delivered on that subject

<sup>1</sup> May 2nd, 1890. See p. 18.

in the House of Commons, and that dealt, at no great length—nor need I now touch it at any length—with the manner in which, when the time arrives, the work of Disestablishment ought to be effected. Gentlemen, it is my strong opinion—it is according to the precedents of our country in analogous cases—it is according, I think, to the considerations of equity and justice—that we should resolve that, so far as depends upon us, when this work has to be done, it shall be done equitably, and even, as far as the nature of the case permits, tenderly. Liberality has always been the maxim of the State in putting an end to monopoly and privilege, and a long course of experience has demonstrated, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that such liberality is wisdom. Of course, no one will hesitate in adopting the principle that every life-interest of a legal character is to be respected. No one, I think, will doubt, though I will not enter into details, that, as a general rule, such questions as may arise with respect to fabrics and manse<sup>s</sup> ought to be approached in a liberal spirit; and permit me to go one step further, and to say, reasoning from experience which we have had, and have at this moment, of the popular feeling in England,—which, I have no doubt, prevails in Scotland,—it ought always to be borne in mind by us—however liberal we may be in our general opinions, and however we may be convinced that Scotland thinks this matter ought to be speedily taken in hand, yet we must remember—that the principal part of the property that is in question, namely, the teinds<sup>1</sup> of this country, are not in the nature of funds to be cast at once into a central treasury. They largely partake of the nature of a local asset, in which the people of the several localities conceive—and, I think, conceive with justice—that they have a special interest, and in the ultimate application of which—which I think it would be premature at present to open and discuss—in the ultimate application of which it may be that they ought to have a certain amount of discretion entrusted to them. I will not dwell long on that subject, but I will refer to some questions that were sent to me at Dalkeith, and which the unreasonable demands that I had

<sup>1</sup> Tithes.

already made on the patient audience at that place prevented me from answering. I need not be long about it here.

The question was put to me, and you may have read it in the papers, "Considering that you stated in 1886 that the wit of man could not devise a plan for retaining the Irish representation at Westminster, how is it that you say now that there are a great many modes in which it can be done?" Now, gentlemen, the reference to my declaration of 1886 errs in a vital omission. I never said that the wit of man could not devise a plan for the purpose. What I said was that the wit of man, so far as I could see, could not devise any plan that would not be open to objection or that would be free from inconveniences. This is exactly what I say now. We certainly have arrived at a conclusion that, so far as we are able to read the public mind, the public mind is under the conviction that these objections are objections that are confined within certain limits—that these inconveniences are not intolerable—that it is far better that we should face them and endeavour to deal with them in a practical spirit, and in what may appear to be the best and safest manner, rather than continue to violate all the greatest principles of national justice, and thereby to sap, as we are now doing, the foundations of Imperial strength.

But, then, these questionists go on to inquire, "How do you mean to do it?" Gentlemen, a man's disposition to answer a question sometimes depends in no small degree upon his opinion of the intention of the man who puts it. We have pledged ourselves frankly to a principle, and that is to give effect in the best manner that the subject permits to the view and desire which we understand to be national and general. With respect to the mode in which it is to be done, what does the questioner want from me? He wants me to point out one among the multitude—for there are a multitude—of methods of proceeding and of applying one and the same principle—for what purpose?—in order that he may bring all the artillery of his ingenuity to bear upon that particular mode of doing it, and to say that, though the thing is good, the manner is detestable. Consider a little further the depth of the astuteness of this gentleman,

who wants to practise upon my well-known simplicity. What they tell us is, that there is to be no dissolution of Parliament till 1893, and consequently no opportunity of dealing practically with this question till 1894. And what they modestly ask is, that I myself, that my friends and colleagues near me, and other friends and colleagues elsewhere, are now to bind ourselves, four years beforehand, not only to the principle to which we have bound ourselves, but to the particular method and definite detail by which it is to take effect—every other person remaining absolutely free, and these very gentlemen remaining free to come down upon us at the last moment, and to say, “You have totally mistaken the opinion of the country; your method of going to work is intolerable, and we protest against your going further with it.”

Now, gentlemen, I will tell you what we say. We are not acting upon principles of reserve. We are acting upon this intelligible principle, that, having undertaken to respect the opinion of the country, we wish to get that opinion in its most deliberate and ripened state. We know that the continued discussion of the question will have the effect of further and further ripening that opinion, and we wish to obtain all the guidance that we can from what we perceive to be the genuine national conviction with respect to the manner of proceeding, as well as with regard to the principle which we have adopted, and it is on that account that our duty to the nation,—our duty to respect the nation in such a manner, and to ascertain its ripe and deliberate views,—binds us to wait until a practical issue is about to be raised, and not prematurely to enter upon matters which belong altogether to a later stage. As far, gentlemen, as my very imperfect understanding enables me to comprehend the subject, that is the reply which I make to those gentlemen who have put me certain questions.

Now, gentlemen, while I am upon that matter, I should like in a very few words to give a general caution—I don't think so much to the people of Midlothian, because I think they want that caution less than the average, but I will say to the Liberal party in the country at large—and that is on the subject of

what are called "test questions." Now, that is a very interesting phrase, and, as I understand it, it very often means this, that where a portion of the community—very often an important portion,—perhaps in some division of the country a predominant portion,—but then we must recollect that we have to make an election for three kingdoms and not for one—where a portion of the community fears that it is not likely to have a majority of the whole country, but that it is likely to exercise a considerable power over local candidates through their own local and particular interests, they erect their own subject of desire into a test question for the entire community. Now, there are a great number of these questions, and do not suppose for a moment that I am speaking of any one of them with disrespect. I am not going to absorb and swallow the whole of them in a lump. But I am enumerating them for the purpose of basing on them a warning I wish to give—and at the same time I wish you to understand that, as to most of them, I think the desires expressed in regard to them are just and expedient; I am now speaking of them exclusively in regard to the disposition of any of their followers to erect them at this moment and universally into test questions for the election of Members of Parliament on which they can act, and then I will ask you to consider what the effect of it must be. I put down seven of them, gentlemen, without the Irish question. The Irish question, I think, has been erected by the convictions of the Liberal party throughout the country into the character of a test question, because it stands between us and every other question, and we cannot get at any other question till the Irish question is out of the way.

Now, here are seven of these questions, and you will see that no one of them is trifling or insignificant; all of them are backed by very energetic, and many of them by very extensive sections of public opinion. The first I name is the great question of Temperance. I shall have to say a word upon it by and by, although not so much as I should like to say; the second is the question of the Eight Hours' Bill; the third is

the question of Disestablishment in Scotland; the fourth is the question of Disestablishment in Wales; the fifth is the question of the Suffrage of Women; the sixth is the question of Home Rule in Scotland; and the seventh is a question which excites a most vital interest in England—a deeper interest, I think, than in this country—the question which is known under the general phrase of Agricultural Allotments. Now, there are seven of these questions, and when any one of them is to be made into a test question, the meaning of it is this: We, who are in favour of this subject, are Liberals—we admit you to be a Liberal—we know you to be a Liberal—we wish you to be returned—but unless you will adopt our test questions, we will either abstain from voting, or vote for a Tory against you, and so put you out of Parliament.

Now, gentlemen, the effect of that practice—which I will not discuss at length—is to make one great army into seven little armies, with seven commanders at least, perhaps more. And I need not tell you what is the consequence on the field of battle of the adoption of these sectional and fractional methods of proceeding, in lieu of being content, as in the mixed character of human affairs we ought to be content, to take up the broadest and the largest issues, and those which commend themselves to the party at large, and to trust to what we know to be, or believe to be, the intrinsic force of the reasoning which support us upon our other views and propositions to ensure for them everything that justice will give. Now, I hope that considerations of that kind will be borne in mind, when the time comes for pronouncing the grave and solemn judgment that the country will have to give on the present great and solemn controversy.

Now, gentlemen, I am going to say one word, which will perhaps create astonishment—I am going to say a word on the question of public economy. Is not that a strange idea, that at this time of day—in the year 1890—when we have got so many things to consider, any man should waste even a minute of your time by talking about public economy? Public economy, gentlemen, has gone out of fashion. When I entered public

life, public economy was greatly in fashion. Mr Cobden—who was believed to be rather an authority in his own day—Mr Cobden used to hold, and hold deliberately, that public economy was an essential part of public virtue. Well, I am not going to detain you at length about it. The country has grown extremely rich. I am not going to deplore the abuse or the waste of a million or two. I deplore it very much, but I am not going to enlarge upon it so long as the country pays its way—so long as the nation knows what is being done, and consequently is responsible for applying the remedy if the danger has come into view. Now, I have just two things to say. A Parliamentary paper has been produced which we never should have heard of but for the judgment, skill, and determination of a friend of mine, not here present, a much respected friend of mine—Mr Lefevre<sup>1</sup>—from which it appears in a manner intelligible to anybody that the military and naval charge of this Empire, which in the year 1835, under the Conservative Government of Sir Robert Peel, I think, stood at about thirteen millions—that military and naval charge has risen to more than thirty-eight millions. That, gentlemen, I think, is a fact that justifies me in having mentioned the subject as one that deserves attention. You had better watch it, you had better see how it goes on from year to year, for the tendency of these things is to grow and not to dwindle, and the consequence of enlarging establishments of this kind invariably is, that a great bulk of the professional men, the great bulk of the Tories, and here and there perhaps a Liberal or two, are apt to say that these establishments are not large enough, that it is unworthy of this great country to haggle about a little money, and that we had better go on and be rather more liberal than less. That is not my opinion, gentlemen. My opinion is, that we have gone beyond the measure of prudence and propriety. I do not want to force that opinion, for we have other matter more necessary, more pressing, and fruitful before us; but this one thing I want to say—I recommend and urge upon you to watch with the utmost vigilance

<sup>1</sup> Mr Shaw-Lefevre had been Postmaster-General in Mr Gladstone's second Administration.

all attempts to conceal from you the expenditure of the country. I tell you plainly that an attempt of that kind was made this year, when the present Government never told us—what they ought to have told us at the first moment—that above thirty-eight millions was the military and naval charge of the year. They endeavoured to keep back a portion of the charge, as Ananias and Sapphira endeavoured to keep back a portion of the price that they had received. Mr Lefevre followed up the subject like a hound with a good scent. He knew what he was going after, and he brought out the truth. At present it stands thus: You ought to consider whether that is a just and a moderate amount of charge, and whether you would like it to be increased or whether you would wish it to be diminished.

Gentlemen, I pass on to that which is the particular subject on which I ought to address you to-day—a most important one, not always as important as it is at the present moment—I mean the manner in which, upon the whole, the existing Parliament has discharged its duty; and don't suppose that I am going to lay upon any one member, or upon the members of any one small body of men, the entire responsibility for what I am going to describe. If the Government has made bad proposals, and taken bad measures to support them, the fault of not correcting that lies with the House of Commons; and if the majority of the House of Commons has not corrected the Government, but, on the contrary, has encouraged it and supported it in all its worst proceedings, the responsibility for that lies, from time to time, with those who, at bye-elections, are called upon to give their votes, and I am thankful, gentlemen, to think, that, to judge from experience, they appear to feel that responsibility. But the time is coming when it will lie on the whole constituency of the country, and the most difficult thing we have to do now is, not to prove the existence of the evils—that really is easy enough—the difficulty is to make the individual voter feel that with him will lie the ultimate responsibility, that in the face of God Almighty, and in the face of men, it is the private voter, not only in the palace, not



only in the mansion, not only in the factory, and not only in the shop, but down to the cottage and the hovel, who has got the question to decide. And if he answers me by saying that after all he has only got a one-millionth part, or a five-millionth part of it, I say, "Yes, but the whole is made up of the parts, and if the mischief you are going to do is small, it is the utmost you can do, and you can do no more; and for misusing your vote, whether the effect of it be great or whether it be comparatively trivial—for misusing your vote you will have to answer."

Before speaking of any particular measure, I must tell you that we have had within the walls of the House of Commons something like a Parliamentary revolution in a department of public life, which is very much withdrawn from the public eye, but which, notwithstanding, is intimately associated with the vital interests of the country—I mean in what is called the Procedure of the House of Commons. You know that for a long time it has been agreed on all hands that Parliament was not strong enough for its work. There was too much to be done, and they could not get through it. But in one thing, gentlemen, they are perfectly irreproachable. It is not their shirking personal labour. No assembly in the world has ever done an amount of personal labour to compare with that which is now done by the British House of Commons. But we have been agreed as to the great excess of the amount of work, and as to the necessity for a great change. Two methods of change have been proposed. We from the first have held, not that it was not right to make regulations more strict in this point and in that, where it could be done without serious violation of principle. But we have held all along that the true method of making Parliament strong enough and free enough to do the business of the country, was to adopt large plans of what is called Devolution,—devolving upon subordinate bodies large portions of what now encumbers and obstructs the progress of Parliament, so that its hands might be free, and, without an increase of labour, it might be able to get far better through its proper work. Now, that is what I call the Liberal idea of meeting this difficulty. But, gentlemen, there has been another

idea, and, as you are aware, our Liberal ideas were not in great favour in the election of 1886, and a Parliament was returned to do most of the things that we disapproved, and to refuse most of the things we wanted. And one of the worst things, in my opinion, that this Parliament has done, has been the method in which it has gone about altering the procedure of Parliament.

Gentlemen, the spirit of the old rules of Parliament was a noble spirit. It was a spirit of trust. It was a spirit congenial to a nation instinct with freedom. It was a spirit of willingness to encounter secondary inconveniences rather than run the remotest risk of interfering with that inestimable and that most valuable practice—though, of course, the practice is likely to be abused—the absolute freedom of debate.

But, gentlemen, I won't describe to you in detail the methods that have been introduced. I will only say this in justice to two distinguished men,—namely, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and the Chairman of Committees,—that although great inconvenience has been suffered, and much mischief done, yet it would have been much greater, but for the remarkable ability and high conscientiousness and courage of these two gentlemen. But in order that you may understand that I am speaking of very serious matters, I will give you one of the instances in which what is called the Closure was put in force. You know that when a Bill comes into the House of Commons, it is, in the first place, read a first and a second time, and it then goes into Committee for the consideration of the details point by point.

Now, in all questions affecting the rights of the people, that consideration in Committee point by point is the most vital part of the whole. A Bill was introduced which I need not describe now, in 1887, under the name of the Crimes Act, which had nothing to do with crime, but which was intended to repress and put down combinations of the people, which would have been lawful combinations in England. That Bill contained a number of provisions woven together into one network. Now, will you believe that under the regulations that now subsist, and the

power of applying what is called the closure, a very large and important portion of the clauses of that Bill passed through the Committee, and were reported and passed into law, without ever being voted upon, without ever being debated at all? We reached a certain clause of the Act, and, having reached that clause, it was the duty of the Chairman to rise and to announce that, under the regulations that had been adopted, the question must be put as to reporting the Bill to the House. Of course, I do not mean to say that the Chairman was coercing the majority. Not at all. It is the majority I am complaining of, but the majority had made it his duty to propose to them—and they adopted the proposal—that the Bill for restricting the liberties of the people of Ireland should be adopted, as to a large portion of it, in the lump, and without the power given to any Irish member, or to any British friend of Ireland, of pointing out the iniquitous method in which several of these provisions, as we thought, were sure to operate. So that, understand, taking it in the rough, a system of coercion has been imported, not into Ireland only, but into the House of Commons, and an endeavour has been made, with a large amount of success, to substitute the system of coercion for the ancient spirit which left in the House of Commons an atmosphere free and pure, worthy of Britons to breathe, consecrated by the recollections of six hundred years, and if we could have had our way, to be handed down as free and as pure as we received it to those who are to follow us in life and in political action.

Well, now, gentlemen, this being the case so far, what comes next? The next question is, How has it succeeded? I am not prepared to admit at once that success would have justified it, but this I will say, that failure would condemn it. If that ancient system of freedom and generosity is to be given up, and is to be trampled down, and a new-fangled system introduced, under the auspices of a pretended Conservatism and of a sham Liberalism—if that is to take place, at any rate success is the only result which can supply for it an excuse or an apology. The question then is, gentlemen, How has it succeeded? and here I say boldly, that it has not succeeded at all. It has failed.

This Parliament has worked hard; it has been made to work, to a great extent, in chains, and the consequence has been just as when the negro had to work with the slave-driver at his back, although you might flog him well from time to time, you got very little out of him. That has been the result of this wretched scheme of coercion introduced into the present Parliament, and, to a certain extent, I am here upon ground in respect to which people are agreed, because you see the Tories go all about the country, and they say: "Well, we must admit very little has been done. We passed some useful measures"—they don't very often tell you what they are—"we would have achieved the most wonderful legislative triumphs—we would have met all the wants of the country, and surpassed all its expectations—if it had not been for the abominable system of obstruction which has been carried out in the House, and which has met us on the right and on the left, in front and in rear, so that in our best efforts, although they have been manful to a degree, and not less prudent than they were brave, we have been baffled by this astounding system of obstruction." That is a question, gentlemen, I want to test, and I want to show you, in the first place, what it is that this Parliament has done.

This Parliament has passed five good measures,—Local Government for England, and Local Government for Scotland—County Councils. The measure of Local Government for England,<sup>1</sup> a most difficult subject, was introduced into the House of Commons by Mr Ritchie, the head of the Local Government Board, in as able a speech as I have ever heard delivered on the introduction of a great measure. It is a pleasure to render a debt of justice to an opponent when he is engaged in doing right—not otherwise. There is no debt of justice when he is not engaged in doing right. The Local Government Bill for Scotland<sup>2</sup> was a second good measure, and the Conversion of the Three per Cents.,<sup>3</sup> which was carried through by Mr Goschen, was a third. I am afraid his name does not altogether stand well in this latitude; but let us do him justice when he is doing well—it may encourage him to do a little more. The conver-

<sup>1</sup> 1888.<sup>2</sup> 1889.<sup>3</sup> 1888.

sion of the Three per Cents. was introduced and passed by him. Then there was another Bill relating to the Scottish Universities,<sup>1</sup> which undoubtedly, upon the whole, was a very valuable Bill; and, again, there was a fifth Bill, relating to Welsh Intermediate Education.<sup>2</sup>

Now, gentlemen, we are going to talk of obstruction, because—I am in your judgment, and subject to your correction, when I say to you that the allegation of obstruction is at present nineteen-twentieths of the argument that the Government makes to the country. I have given to you these five good measures. How were they passed through the House of Commons? Were those five measures obstructed by the Liberal party? No; they received the warm and decided support of the Liberal party, and if we occupied any time at all upon them, it was only in the attempt to make them better than they were, because the County Councils Bills for England and for Scotland undoubtedly were little more than the skeletons of good Bills. We wanted to put more flesh upon the bones. We were not allowed to do it, but we forwarded and promoted the passing of these Bills, and I should like to see whether any Tory speaker will deny that every one of those Bills passed through the House of Commons with the aid, with the support, and with the countenance of the Liberal Opposition. When I say the Liberal Opposition, I do not exclude the Irish Nationalists. All those Bills were either acquiesced in or positively supported by the Nationalist Members from Ireland.

Well, as I have given you an account of the good measures passed by the present Parliament, and assisted by the Liberals, I think I ought fairly to say next what are the good measures that have passed the present Parliament, and that were opposed by the Liberals. I have not heard of one. I do not think that one exists. I do not think that it is in the power of any Tory or any Dissident to point to such a thing. Then I pass on to another class. What am I to say of the bad measures that have

<sup>1</sup> 1889.

<sup>2</sup> For the better Administration and Endowment of the Universities of Scotland, 1889.

passed with the support of the Liberals? I think there are none. But one very bad measure passed in spite of their opposition in the year 1887, which has been the cause of an infinity of difficulty both in Ireland and here. I mean that which we call the Coercion Act.

Well, then, gentlemen, five measures that are good, and may, perhaps, be called more or less great—some of them decidedly great—have been passed with our support; one very bad measure has been passed against us; and one other very bad measure there is which was introduced, which was opposed by the Liberals, and which failed, and that is the measure which we call the Public House Compensation Bill. Now, gentlemen, I do not want to imply that there has been no other useful work done by the present Parliament. I am happy to say that under our institutions there is always a great deal of useful work which is necessary for the country, that is going on within the walls of our public offices, whoever is in power, from time to time, and, indeed, continuously. But what I am speaking of is this. I want to bring into your minds the power of judging how far this new coercive system of procedure in the House of Commons has been successful, or has been a miserable failure, as compared with that which preceded it. And for that purpose I think I have mentioned the only Bills that have ever found their way into a Queen's speech at the beginning of the session—for that is the test—and have afterwards passed into law. These are the Bills which the Government thinks important, and whenever they have an important measure to introduce they put it into the Queen's speech, and no other than those five I have named—no other that I am aware of—has been put into the Queen's speech at the beginning of the session. And, ladies and gentlemen, I say that is a very poor and scanty and meagre return of work for a Parliament that has now sat with an enormous majority to carry on its work—that has now sat through four full years.

Well, but then is the thing getting better, or is the thing getting worse? Gentlemen, I tell you it is not getting better, but it is getting worse, and for that reason I will give you a

few figures of the simplest character—nobody shall complain that they are difficult to follow or to understand—belonging to the years 1889-90. Here are some little documents of great value—the Queen's speeches—made at the beginning of the session and at the end of the session. And as we know it is a known Parliamentary fact that the Government announces its policy and its work of legislation in the Queen's speech at the beginning of the session, you perceive that by comparing the result with the Queen's speech at the end of the session, which renders an account of the things done and the things undone, we get the means of doing what would otherwise be very difficult, namely, of bringing to something like a touchstone the professions made by the Government when they go about the country and describe all the good things they have done, and all the good things they would have done. Here are the speeches of 1889-90, but I will not even quote these speeches. In 1889 the Government promised in the speech at least fifteen measures. There were at least fifteen measures of a rank to find their way into the Queen's speech, and they passed five of them and failed with ten of them. That was in 1889. They passed one-third. You would not think it, gentlemen,—if you were landed proprietors,—you would not think it a very satisfactory result if your factor announced to you that he had been able to levy one-third of the rents, but as to the other two-thirds he was able to give no account of them. And the same thing would, I think, follow in the case of the shopkeeper with his bills, if one-third of his customers paid him all right, and the other two-thirds were nowhere to be heard of. In 1890 we did not mend that. There were ten Bills promised—I mean ten Bills of public interest, because there was an eleventh Bill which I do not take into view—for improving the barracks of the soldiers—an important Bill, but one which had nothing to do with the general appetite of the nation for progressive legislation—ten were promised in 1890. Two were passed and eight failed, and the two that were passed were perhaps the least significant of all. One of them related to the winding up of companies—it was to facilitate the procedure in

the winding up; and the other touched an important subject, but I do not believe it was of a very vital character—it had to do with the subject of workmen's dwellings; but in all the great subjects to which attention was widely directed—in every one of them—the whole procedure of Parliament this year failed, and failed miserably—the Tithes, and the Publicans' Compensation, and Irish Land Purchase, one Bill after another went rolling helter-skelter down the stairs of the House of Commons, to be buried, perhaps never to rise again. Gentlemen, you have all heard of a publication called the *Edinburgh Review*. You know what it was, and you look back with great respect upon what it was. I do not know whether you know what it is, but I think I may describe it by saying that it gives support to the present Government with a kind of heavy enthusiasm, if you can bring together that substantive and that adjective—and they had an article in July which I advise anybody to consult who doubts anything of what I have said, and he will see that a more beggarly account of empty dishes never was served up than is distinctly recorded by the *Edinburgh Review*, which, as I have said, with a heavy enthusiasm, supports the Government, and which announces at the end that the majority of the Government in the course of these years since the election has been “slightly impaired.”

Well, gentlemen, such is the case of the failure—the growing failure—from year to year of the present coercive system of legislation in the House of Commons, and of the efforts of the Government to do your work. But it is all due, they say, to obstruction. Now I have studied how to bring that question to a test. It is very easy for members of the Government to go about and say—every man of them says—it is their staple dish—not only their staple dish, it is their whole bill of fare—they serve up to audience after audience throughout the country this terrible obstruction which has ruined all their good intentions, and all their gallant and wise endeavours. Of course, it is just as easy for us to go about the country and to say—if we were disposed to adopt that method—that this charge of obstruction is an impudent imposture, that there is no foundation for it at all,



that it is a miserable device of men who resort to it because every rag of every other pretext has been stripped from off their backs, and so, in the defect of any decent clothing in which to present themselves to the world, they have tried to concoct and to weave together this pretended account of Parliamentary obstruction.

Now, gentlemen, what I propose is this—to go from generalities to particulars. The way to see whether a charge of that kind is just, or whether it is flagrantly unjust and untrue, is to go to particulars. I myself charged the Tory Opposition under the late Government with obstruction. I will give you a specimen. We proposed a plan of Closure of Debate which was never intended—and we made it known it was never intended—to be used by the majority against the minority in the ordinary sense, but was only intended to enable the House, when it was possessed, irrespective of party, with a concurrent feeling to put a stop to the occasional obstinacy, or, I might almost say, impertinence—at any rate inportunity—that is a better word—of some particular member not gifted with as much wisdom as zeal. That proposal, which was so feeble that it never but once was brought into operation, and then it was not worth putting into operation—that proposal, on the pretext of respect for liberty of debate, was opposed by the Tory party for nineteen nights altogether. There is obstruction! There are the masters of it! There are the professors of it! If now they are charging obstruction where it does not exist, their guilt is great, for they perfectly know—they know from their own practical experience—the meaning of the word they use.

Now, gentlemen, let us look at the way in which the time has been spent, and, as I tell you, I make my appeal from generalities to particulars. Down to the 28th of June—it is needless to come lower down than that, because after that time it was a question of winding up the business in detail—but down to the 28th of June, no less than sixty-five nights of the session were taken for Government business. I won't go through it—it would be impossible, and a great deal too wearisome for you if I were to attempt to go through the whole of the employment of

these nights. I will only take four points, but they will quite suffice to enable you to understand how the matter lies. Seven nights were spent by the Government upon a vote which they introduced with respect to the report of the Parnell Commission. Six nights were spent by the House of Commons upon the Land Purchase Bill, in carrying it to a state at which the Committee stage was attained. Four nights were in like manner spent in carrying the Tithes Bill to a similar stage; and ten nights were spent upon the Bill for the Compensation of Public-houses. Now, gentlemen, just look at these four points, which, as you will see, dispose of a large portion of the available time, and I am quite certain that if it were possible—which it is not—to bring these people who charge us with obstruction to book, those are the subjects that they would put it upon, and therefore I wish to meet them on their own ground.

First, I take the Parnell Commission. Well, gentlemen, I tell you here, as I have said in the House of Commons and elsewhere, that, in my opinion, the demand upon the House of Commons to give that vote condemning the Irish Members for speeches and acts which were done a good many years ago, was one of the worst, most dishonourable, most disgraceful, and most offensive acts, when adopted by Parliament, as it was, that has marked British history for two hundred years. I will not attempt to argue the question in detail. It would keep me too long, but I will give you these two reasons. The first reason is this, that these acts for which the Irish Members were condemned were acts done prior to the end of the year 1885, and that in the end of the year 1885 it was my duty, standing in this very place, to describe to you the close and intimate alliance that had been formed between the British Tories and the Irish Nationalists. Every one of these acts had then been done. That did not prevent the Irish Tories from joining hands with the Nationalists to turn out the Liberals, and that, comparatively, is a small affair. It did not prevent them from holding out to the Irish Nationalists a virtual promise of some measure of Home Rule. It did not prevent them from sending Lord Carnarvon to Ireland, to have Mr Parnell to dine with

him, and to hold conversations with him that left on his mind the impression and belief that the Tories were going to give them Home Rule. And, gentlemen, I do not blame the Irish Nationalists. I never have blamed them for entering into that alliance. It was their duty, in the condition in which they stood, to get assistance for Ireland wherever they could. And so it would be now. If they could get a fuller justice for Ireland by going to the Tories than by being with us, then I should say that they would be right in getting it. That is their supreme duty until the capital wants of Ireland shall have been supplied. But look at the Tories; and what do you think of the men who enlisted these people as their allies for the general election—who took the benefit of their votes in the constituencies—who, in order to get that benefit, held out to them what they believed to be the promise of a substantial adoption of their wishes—and who now come down and place upon the pages of Parliamentary journals a pretended judicial condemnation of the previous acts of those Irish Members?

But, gentlemen, there is another point,—in which they were still more guilty, if possible,—and it is this. The three Judges who examined the conduct of the Irish Members arrived at the conclusion that in various points their language, if not their acts, had been violent and dangerous, and such as could not be approved. I cannot go into details. That, I think, is a fair general description of it. They then said: “It is very possible that it may be alleged that these excesses are excesses that always happen in great national struggles, and it may also be alleged in favour of the Irish Members, that the general upshot and effect of their exertions has been to do infinitely more good than harm.” The Judges stated these points with perfect fairness. They went on to say: “These things, whether they be true or not, are no part of the matter submitted for our consideration.” I am not going to enter upon the question whether they were right or wrong in that matter; but this I say—that they fairly placed before us the considerations which were necessary for a complete understanding of the case; and what

did the Government propose to Parliament to do? The Judges had said, "We deliver a condemnation"—limited it was to certain subjects, but still a serious condemnation, and it was not on the gravest matters, but it was upon matters that were of some gravity—"we propose a condemnation," said the Judges, "founded upon one-half of the case, because that is the only half referred to us." But what are you to say of a Parliament which, dealing with the honour and character of its own members, adopted that judgment upon one-half of the case, when it was its solemn duty, if it were to give any judgment at all, to give its sense upon the whole case? Parliament was not restrained from considering as legislators what the Judges were restrained from considering, because they were only invested with a narrow and limited commission; but Parliament deliberately overlooked and set aside that consideration, and, refusing to look at the conduct of the Irish Members as a whole in fighting a difficult and so long apparently desperate battle of their nation, they condemned them for the things that could be said against them, without choosing to hear or to weigh what was to be said in their favour. Well, seven nights were occupied in getting quit of that subject in the House of Commons, and I ask you whether that was too long for us to occupy in the endeavour to bring out to the sense of men, whose minds were apparently obtuse and impenetrable, what we thought elementary considerations of the most sacred character—necessary to the peace and decency of human life between man and man—necessary, above all, to the duty and to the dignity of a great legislative assembly.

Now, the next great obstruction was this—six days were spent upon Land Purchase. Now, gentlemen, the Act for Land Purchase—the merits of which I am not going now to discuss—was one of the most complex measures ever submitted to Parliament. In six days of discussion, it went through its first reading, it went through its second reading, it got rid of all the preliminaries to the Committee, and there was nothing for Parliament to do but to proceed to details. Well, gentlemen, I can only tell you that I do not think I have ever known, in all my experience in controversial matters, a con-

plicated measure of that kind which has attained the Committee stage in anything like so short a period ; and so far from its being a case where obstruction was practised, the only question that can be raised is whether the Opposition did their full duty in allowing such a measure, involving, among other things, a permanent abstraction of thirty-three millions of your money, for a purpose which at the election you had condemned—whether we were right in allowing it to go forward at such a rapid rate.

Four nights were spent upon the Tithes Bill—not a Bill probably exciting great interest in Scotland, but one of large importance in England—but in the same way, gentlemen, I say, and every one who has Parliamentary experience will support me, that with regard to this Bill, far less complex than the Irish Land Bill, but still a very difficult Bill, and with some very disputable propositions of great delicacy and importance—to carry it through all the introductory stages, through the second reading, and to get the Speaker out of the chair—that is, to be ready virtually to begin the details in Committee—that was not only not a case of obstruction—it was a case of extremely rapid progress.

Well, then, I come to the Public House Compensation Bill. Ah! gentlemen, I wish I were fresh, and that you were fresh, that I might go into a more extended consideration of that subject. I cannot do it, and you could not be expected to listen to-day to what I could say upon that Bill. But what happened to that Bill? They charge that there were ten days spent upon it. Well, gentlemen, I say that they were ten days well spent. And now let me ask you just to consider that the time taken upon a Bill depends partly on its complexity, and partly on the gravity of the issues which it raises. Now this Bill was introduced in the most improper manner. It was of enormous importance. There was no doubt that it ought to have been announced in the speech from the Throne. Instead of that, to the absolute surprise of everybody, and when the House of Commons was already crowded and crammed with Government measures jostling one another, this wretched Bill was produced, and the other measures were thrust out of the

way, and in fact a confusion and disorder of business was established by the agency of the Government itself, taking one of their Bills to-day, and another of their Bills to-morrow, and another Bill the day after, such as I have never witnessed. But the issues in this Bill were most important. We are all agreed that the drink question is one of the greatest questions of the day. About that there is no doubt at all. We are all agreed that it requires public action—executive action, and legislative action—both, in my opinion. What said the Government, and what said we? Why, both of us made undoubtedly the boldest challenges to one another. The Government said, “Here is this tremendous subject, which nobody has been able effectually to touch. We will now produce to you a plan which is so admirable, so powerful, and yet so gentle, that it will conciliate all interests, and that it will mitigate and finally remove all evils. It is just to the brewers, it is just to the publicans, it will reduce the number of public-houses, and reduce the amount of drunkenness in the country.” These are very broad and great allegations. And what did we say on the other side? “Why,” we said on the other side, “this is not a moderate reform, as you call it, of the public house system. It is a great aggravation of existing evils. That which constitutes the essential difficulty in our public house system is the enormous value of the pecuniary investments that face you at every turn when you approach it. You, by this Bill, are giving legislative sanction to that value in its most extravagant form. If you pass this Bill, the value, which is called the good-will, of the public-houses in England will amount to £200,000,000. Scotland and Ireland might possibly add £50,000,000 or £100,000,000 more. I do not know. And you bring this forward under the name of a reform; but, in point of fact, it is a Bill to make all reform hopeless and impossible.” I am not, gentlemen, giving you these brief and summary statements as if they embraced the whole argument of the case, but I want you to see how vast a case it was, and how absurd it is to complain that ten days of the time of the House of Commons were spent in bringing so vast and important a subject to an

issue. And how did it come to its issue? It came to its issue, gentlemen, I hope partly by our loyal endeavours to show up the mischief of the scheme. But it came to its issue mainly by this, that the Government found the ground giving way under their feet. They found their majority diminishing day by day. They found that it was doubtful whether they might not come to absolute defeat. They knew that absolute defeat on the subject would raise the question of resignation as well as defeat, and therefore they withdrew their Bill in time. It was not our arguments that defeated the Bill. Our arguments may have exposed, and I trust did expose, the Bill, but it was not our arguments that defeated the Bill. The motive that defeated the Bill was the fear of want of votes. A long experience enables me to assure you that no argument—not if it were knit as closely as by Euclid or by Newton—is of the smallest effect in procuring the defeat of a Bill in the present House of Commons, provided the votes hold together. But the votes did not hold together. They went down from 80 or 90, which they then were—they went down gradually dwindling and tapering like a beautiful spire. They went down from 80 or 90 to 40 or 30, and from that to 20 or 10, and once, I believe, came fearfully near to zero itself, when the number 4 was all that could be recorded. That was a time to consider the matter seriously. So the brewers and the temperance interest and everything else went to the wall. The Bill disappeared, and the charge of obstruction was foisted by the Government on the country to conceal the abortive design and the disastrous and deplorable failure of the Government. Gentlemen, I rejoice in having taken part in the defeat of that Bill. I assure you most sincerely—though I don't say it was ill intended—I have made no offensive accusations with regard to the motives—I am ready to believe almost anything they tell me of their motives, and therefore I believe that they did honestly intend it for the promotion of temperance,—but I say this, that it gave to the main obstacle in our way such a portentous power as to make it wholly insurmountable, and to reduce almost to despair, if that Bill had passed, any and every temperance reform. Now, gentlemen, I think I have said

enough on the subject of obstruction as it was when our little shadowy proposal was met with nineteen nights of opposition, and as it has been in the year 1890, when the Bills that I have spoken of—the failures of the Government—have been before Parliament, and all of them have had this kind of funeral pall cast over them to hide their ugly features, and present to the world something or other that would serve as an excuse for what has happened.

Gentlemen, before I close I must venture to say some words to you, which will not, I hope, be long, on the subject of the foreign policy of the country. I have not opened my mouth on that subject in Midlothian as yet, and I need not detain you long, for you know the principle upon which we have proceeded. We have carefully avoided throwing any obstacle in the way of the Foreign Minister when difficulty appeared to be gathering round him, and we have been resolved to throw no such obstacles until we see distinct and positive grounds for objecting to what he was about.

There is one subject, gentlemen, upon which I do seriously object to his proceedings, and which I must briefly mention—it is connected with the Island of Malta. Now, the Foreign Minister sent for the first time in our history during 200 years—the first time in our history since the Revolution—he sent an accredited Minister to the Pope—I will not say to the Court of Rome, because it is very doubtful in what sense there is a Court of Rome. A Court of Rome implies a temporal power. There is no temporal power. The Pope has no more temporal power at this moment than the Moderator of the General Assembly. He certainly has spiritual rule over vastly more subjects, but you will understand that it is rather a staggering affair to send a Minister to one who is not a sovereign. It is said that a Minister has gone before. But, gentlemen, nobody has ever been accredited before. It is quite true that there have been agents—agents who were sent to convey and to receive information—but that was at a time when the Pope was a temporal sovereign, and when the only question to be considered was one of a much narrower character. However, in this case what



appears was this—I am not afraid that the Protestant character of the country will be interfered with, because it is not in the power of any Minister dabbling in matters of this kind—even if he commits any follies—it is not in his power to modify that character. In point of fact, he would very soon find out the necessity of retracing his steps if he did attempt it. But, gentlemen, what does appear is this—in the first place, that through those most unwise negotiations<sup>1</sup> between Sir Lintorn Simmons, under the authority of Lord Salisbury and the Pope, the civil privileges in Malta, even of Protestants, if they contracted what were called mixed marriages, were brought into the utmost danger—that is to say, the highest danger of all—the danger of a pronounced invalidity of their marriage. The noise, the uproar, that immediately arose from a vivid dissatisfaction, I think, showed the Government that the sooner they gave up that part of their project the better. Well, I do not speak of the matter now as if we had it fully before us, because we have not; but I think there are these three things to be considered. In the first place, I do not like to send the Ambassador of the Crown—of the Queen—to negotiate abroad with any personage whatever about the rights of British subjects in the British dominion. It seems to me that that is to assume an unworthy attitude, and one that will not be approved by the people of this country. My second point is, that such proceedings are very dangerous to the civil rights of our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, because arrangements are made behind their backs between the Pope in Rome and this British agent. They are not consulted. They find the faith of the country pledged, and there is no security for the maintenance of their civil rights. Thirdly, I must say that, although I know that many other Powers send ambassadors to the Pope, yet I think the view in England has always been that ambassadors are for temporal sovereigns, and for nobody else, and that to send an ambassador to the Pope comes dangerously near to supporting the claim which the Pope—I think very unfortunately for his own interests—the claim which he makes that some part of Italy

<sup>1</sup> See p. 214.

shall be again placed under clerical dominion, in order that he may not only be a spiritual, but a temporal sovereign. Anything of that kind wounds the feelings of Italy, and disturbs our relations with Italy—and disturbs them for a cause not only insufficient, but also, I think, unjust. Now, gentlemen, I mention that to you as a question you ought to watch. We shall have to hear more of it. We are not yet fully informed. You ought to watch it, and be a little on your guard against proceedings which, in my opinion, have been in the highest degree indiscreet.

Now I will move on more rapidly. With regard to the question that was a good deal discussed, of the arrangement in South Africa,<sup>1</sup> my belief is that, considered as a whole, it does credit to Lord Salisbury. I do not say that critics may not pick holes in it. I do not say that everything in it is satisfactory, or that it will of necessity work satisfactorily; but I say that, upon the whole, I believe he did the best that the circumstances of the case permitted. Well, there are two subjects, both of them standing difficulties—one of them is the Newfoundland fisheries, and the other is the military occupation of Egypt. We have carefully abstained from saying a single word that could create difficulties for him either in the one or the other, and so, gentlemen, you may depend upon it—so we shall continue to act. It is impossible, unfortunately, when you have touched foreign policy, to pass away from it without looking to the east of Europe.

And here I am not going to blame the Government, but I am going to speak some words of regret and dissatisfaction with regard to what we hear of things passing in the Empire of Russia: I am convinced that some part of what is going on in that empire would be abhorrent to the feelings of all its best subjects—of all such men as the Russian Ambassador in England, of all such men as the Russian Foreign Minister in St Petersburg, and of all such men as the Emperor of Russia himself. But I am grieved to say that the accounts we receive

<sup>1</sup> Arising out of the seizure of the Delagoa Bay Railway by the Portuguese Government on June 28th, 1889.

of the civil oppression that is now apparently being practised upon the Jews, and the accounts we receive, even of personal and corporal cruelty in certain cases, inflicted upon them, are to the last degree painful and repulsive. I earnestly hope that we may be of use in bringing some knowledge of these questions to the authorities in Russia—for remember, gentlemen, that perhaps the capital merit among all the merits of free government is that it ensures publicity, whereas the greatest of all the disadvantages of despotism is that it is almost essentially and inseparably allied with secrecy, and that the ruler seldom knows of the abuses that are going on under his official sanction. I do trust that we may be favoured with better accounts from that quarter in matters with respect to which we have a strong sentiment; for although, gentlemen, you have not many Jews resident in Scotland, yet you have some. One of that race at the present moment excites your warmest and liveliest sympathy.<sup>1</sup> In England we know them well, and I am bound in truth and frankness to say that we have every reason to esteem them highly. Well, now, there is another great political question in Russia. You have heard of Finland. Finland is a State, small comparatively with Russia, but Finland has long enjoyed—ever since it was attached to Russia, it has enjoyed—what may be called a legislative independence—not in all things corresponding with the Home Rule we ask for Ireland—but still it has been a system of great freedom, great liberty, which has given complete satisfaction in Finland, and has made Finland most loyally attached to Russia. A powerful party in that country, whom I consider to be the first cousins of the Tories and Dissentients in this country—a powerful party in that country is endeavouring to put down the independence of Finland, and to cause Finland to be governed from St Petersburg, just as Ireland is governed from London. Gentlemen, I heartily wish ill to all such schemes.

But there is a sorer subject still, and that is the state of Turkey. The state of Turkey, I fear, with regard to what remains of Turkey in Europe, and with regard to parts, at

<sup>1</sup> The Countess of Rosebery was very ill at Dalmeny.

least, of Turkey in Asia, and especially to Armenia, seems to grow more and more hopeless. We are not perfectly informed as to details. I am not going to censure Lord Salisbury, because I can well conceive that his power in this matter is much behind his will. We are not going to censure them, but there cannot be a doubt that the Government of Armenia, the government of our fellow-Christians in Armenia—and, if they are not fellow-Christians, they are our fellow-men, which would be just the same—the Government of Armenia is marked with oppression, with plunder, with violation of women, with reckless disregard of life as well as of liberty, and is more and more sealing what will at some time perhaps be recognised to be the doom of what was once the great and powerful Turkish Empire.

I turn for a moment, gentlemen, from that melancholy spectacle, with respect to which it may become our duty to stimulate the Government, if we can, to greater activity—I turn from that to a spectacle of a very different kind—the spectacle of Bulgaria—of a country once<sup>1</sup> exhibiting to Europe the most horrible specimen of what cruelty and reckless inhumanity can accomplish against a people. Now, there is a joyful and complete reversal of all those painful features. I have in my hand a letter from a most intelligent friend, who gives me in a few words—that is, I will only give you a few words of the account which he gives me of the present state of Bulgaria—completely realising all the anticipations that we ventured to hold out at the time when we were told that it was a monstrous offence against the balance of power to speak a word for Bulgaria, and that it was useless to speak of self-government in that country, for they were totally incapable of managing their own affairs. Now, here is the opinion of a gentleman—I do not know that I am justified in giving his name, but I assure you he is one of the most intelligent, and trustworthy, and assiduous men that I know, and what he says of the present state of Bulgaria is this: “Law and order are maintained all over the country without the slightest difficulty. Brigandage has entirely ceased. Justice is administered with perfect

fairness"—carry in your mind, as I read out these incidents, what is going on in Ireland—"justice is administered with perfect fairness. Roads have been made or improved in all directions. Education is free and compulsory; schools have been opened in every commune; technical schools and a university have been established, while a large number of bursars are maintained at foreign universities." Then he goes on to say, gentlemen, that economy is observed, that the debt of Bulgaria is but three millions sterling, and that the whole of that three millions has been expended in the construction of railroads, and he closes with—what we could never get one of the Jingoës to believe—namely, that if they were afraid of the power of Russia, they were defeating their own purpose, for the true barrier between Russia and Turkey was a living barrier of free men, and no other barrier could be erected; and my friend writes and says, "It will be difficult for the Russians to advance through Bulgaria to Constantinople without the consent of its people. The Turks are already beginning to recognise that it forms a buffer between them and Russia." There, gentlemen, is a picture for you of what Home Rule can achieve among a people who had lived for four centuries at least under an unmitigated oppression, who were considered totally incompetent for the management of their own affairs, and for interfering in whose matters we were treated as something worse than busybodies, for we were—some of us—denounced as neither more nor less than Russian agents and Russian spies.

Ah! gentlemen, there I close. I ask you to go with me at one step from Bulgaria to Ireland. Not in Bulgaria alone, but all over Europe, you may see in a multitude of spots the blessed effects of investing human beings with a reasonable control over the government of their own destinies, and over the settlement of their own affairs; as, on the other hand, you may see cases of rupture, of dissension, and of difficulty that have arisen where that wise course has been obstructed, and the method of force has been pursued. Let us, gentlemen, lay that lesson to heart. What is good for human nature in the East is

good for it in the West. What is good for the foreigner long degraded is good for our fellow-subjects, who have already fought and won a large portion of their battle. Go on to the consummation of the good and, I will say, the sacred work, and proceed upon that principle—sanctioned alike by feeling and by prudence—that the true way to secure the foundations of law and order in the country is to make the people that inhabit it conversant with them through the medium of a just, an equitable, and a kindly administration, and through the experience of the inestimable blessings which they are calculated and enabled to convey.

## FREE TRADE AND THE M'KINLEY TARIFF

DUNDEE, OCTOBER 29, 1890

Mr Gladstone was presented with the freedom of the city of Dundee and afterwards formally opened a Fine Art Exhibition in the Victoria Art Gallery. 3

MY LORD PROVOST, Bailies, and Town Councillors, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I address you, trusting to your patience in listening to any words that may proceed from your youngest burghess. Though I am a very young burghess in Dundee, I am a tolerably old burghess of some other places. I am not sure whether there are any older in Scotland at this moment, but we are now in the year 1890, and I can asseverate to you that I was made a burghess of the ancient and royal burgh of Dingwall in 1820, or I believe in 1819. I have never failed, I believe, in my duties as a burghess of the royal burgh of Dingwall, and I trust, sir, that I shall not fail in whatever duties may attach to me as a burghess of the great city of Dundee. It is to me, as you have justly anticipated, a very great satisfaction and a very great honour to have my name added to a roll upon which we find the names of so many distinguished and even illustrious persons. But, sir, it is, if not a greater honour—I frankly own in the presence of this assemblage—it is a still greater satisfaction and pleasure and matter of interest to me, that I am added to a roll whereon stand the names of ancestors of mine, both near and remote. My father, whose name is ever dear and venerated to me, was one of your burghesses in the eighteenth century; and others of my name and of my blood appear on that roll as early as in the fifteenth, or, I think, in the fourteenth century of our era. And, sir, you have said that I am not slow to claim the name

of a Scotsman, and, undoubtedly, even if I were slow to claim it, there is the fact staring me in the face that not a drop of blood runs in my veins except what is derived from a Scottish ancestry. Now, sir, I rejoice to meet you in the Kinnaird Hall, for there again I am encountered by the pleasing and delightful association which the name suggests. I enjoyed for, I think, from forty to fifty years the friendship of the late Lord Kinnaird. His name has a very high place in my esteem and affection, and I rejoice also that I meet you in a place dedicated to all manner of useful purposes; for that reminds me that, though my character as a politician is one very dear to me, and although I think that in that respect there is a pretty close sympathy between myself and a considerable portion of the inhabitants of Dundee, I am here to forget everything that relates to sectional politics. I meet you simply as a burghess and as a citizen, to consider, if I do venture to consider, matters that are of common interest, in a hall which, as I understand, is usefully and nobly dedicated to every beneficial public purpose. Well, sir, on coming to Dundee, I cannot but be struck with the fact that since the time when I first knew it, which was in the year 1837, it has been, I may say, not only an enlarged, not only an improved, but a reconstructed city. I have travelled to-day through your noble streets, and I have seen—already seen—a large portion of your vast population, and I naturally think of the interests which have been reared up, by means of which Dundee is now great, and will in future, as I trust, be greater still, and my mind turns spontaneously towards a subject which is one of common view, common judgment, common feeling to us, namely, the state of your commerce, the dangers with which some have supposed that commerce recently to have been threatened, and the character of the estimate which as rational men you ought to form as to your probable future.

It is a subject of great interest in connection with the name—I will not say a good name—I will not say a well-omened name—I will not say a highly acceptable name, but at any rate a name sufficiently familiar to you—namely, that of a gentleman



who bears the designation of M'Kinley, and of that tariff<sup>1</sup> by association with which, as I understand, he is most likely to gain, if he does gain it at all, a title to immortality. Now, gentlemen, this is a very great subject. I hope you will not think I am now making victims of you, by discharging upon you the relics and the leavings of matter which I ought to have placed before my constituents. No; I did think—I may have been wrong, but I did think—there was no place in which this subject would have greater interest than in the city of Dundee. Not only your position as a great commercial and manufacturing centre, but your traffic with the United States of America itself, makes it, I think, appropriate here to consider what is the nature of these proceedings in America about which we have heard so much. Whether it is good, or whether it is bad, will not require very long to discuss; what amount of evil it is likely to do to us, and what amount of evil it is likely to do to the people of the United States themselves, is a subject which it is impossible not to deem worthy of some remark. Now, sir, I stand here in the land where Adam Smith was born, the parent and patriarch of political economy—the man who first taught us that in our intercourse with other nations, as well as among ourselves, it was better to have our hands free than to have our hands and arms in manacles—who taught the great doctrines of Free Trade, and who has imbued the world with these doctrines. This is the land of Adam Smith; England is the land of Pitt, of Sir Robert Peel, and of Cobden. These great teachers, whose names are enshrined in my mind with a veneration which I think is due to the benefactors of mankind. But, my Lord Provost, I am not about to bring a railing accusation against the people of the United States—first of all, because I have received from that people greater kindness than I have from any nation, except my own, on the face of the earth; and, secondly, because I believe that it would be very bad policy indeed in us to exaggerate our own share in the operation of this M'Kinley tariff—believing, as I do, that Protection, although it may inflict incidentally and collaterally

<sup>1</sup> The Tariff Act had been passed on the preceding October 1st.

blows upon the countries that are in connection with the protected country, yet does by far the greatest share of the mischief to the country in which it is adopted, and whose people it plunders and defrauds. I am not going, therefore, to treat you to the commonplaces of Free Trade. It is unnecessary; but I am going just to look for a few moments at the facts of a case of this kind.

My Lord Provost, I am greatly struck, even this very day, in considering the history of the American and of the British tariff. Fifty years ago we had 1200 articles upon our commercial tariff, which we have picked to pieces and got quit of—at least we have reduced them to about the number of twelve, on which we levy duties, strictly to meet our fiscal necessities. But America, the land of progress, has been pursuing exactly an opposite process. I had the opportunity of examining—through the kindness of my excellent friend, and your excellent representative, Mr Leng, and the courtesy of the Consul of the United States in Dundee—of examining the tariff of the United States as it stood in 1874. At that time America had begun, and had made very considerable progress in, the work of building up a protective system. But now she is greatly more advanced. However, in this tariff of 1874 I find, by a trustworthy table register, that the taxed articles—the numbers of items—in the American tariff at that date was exactly 1492. They beat us, you observe, gentlemen. Our antiquated tariff, which we had destroyed—a voluminous tariff, which we have reduced to less than one side of one single leaf of paper—has gone, but that principle of voluminous tariff has had its revenge in America, where already in 1874 there were 1492 articles, or, as I wish to be liberal, I will use round numbers, and say 1500 articles. Well, then, gentlemen, the kindness of another friend has supplied me with a copy of this wonderful M'Kinley tariff. Naturally I was anxious to make a slight effort to acquire a certain amount of knowledge of it, and it is so formidable an affair that I would recommend the institution of Chairs in the American Universities, and the appointment of professors, and the gathering of classes who should be students of the tariff, and the erecting a

knowledge of it into one of the new sciences. I have been very unsuccessful, gentlemen, in my own efforts, and I will give you the cause. I have stumbled and broken down at the very first article. The very first article on which I hit—it is number 105—begins with flint and lime, and then enumerates a number of other things; and I did think, when I came to flint and lime, that surely these were pretty innocent articles. The introduction of free flint and lime cannot greatly injure American manufacture or displace American labour. The flint will not make men's hearts harder, and the lime will not blow them up. Nevertheless, when I got to the end of the sentence, I found that flint and lime, with glassware and some other things, were taxed 60 per cent. "ad valorem." Well, gentlemen, I really must frankly say that, with the ascertainment of that fact, my study of the M'Kinley tariff came to an end. I could not go any further.

Let us endeavour to look at the facts of the case. We have among us a national opinion in favour of Free Trade, yet there are a certain number of people who believe that the injurious effects of Protection are chiefly felt by the countries which deal with the protected country. Let us look at the countries that practise Protection. The argument is that Protection fosters their trade. Now, that I believe to be fundamentally a mistake. I do not mean to say there are no injurious effects to other countries. There is a deal of displacement and disturbance—what we may call demoralisation of trade—and a great deal of inconvenience felt by individuals and even by classes. But, taking a larger view, it is not true that the tariff of any country on earth can interfere seriously with the prosperity of Great Britain or the United Kingdom. And why? If you will simply follow me, in a few words you will see, I think, how it is that this operates. Let us suppose that there are twenty great markets in the world, and that these, for the sake of argument, are all the markets in the world, and that in one of these markets a stringent Protection law—such as the M'Kinley tariff—is passed. No doubt the first effect is to injure us in that market, and to restrict our dealings: but then

what is the larger and wider effect? The larger and wider effect is to increase, to raise the standard of prices in the United States of America. Raising the standard of prices at home means a diminished power of exportation. That diminished power of exportation means, that while we are damnified in that one of our twenty markets, we derive benefit in the other nineteen from the diminished power of the United States to compete with us in any of them—a diminished power due to the augmentation of prices and to the imposition of restraints under which she has to work. And so, even if we go round the world, it still remains that each country that gives greater stringency to Protection within its own borders is thereby—though damaging us within its own market—is thereby giving us a freer and a broader field, and a more commanding power in every one of the other nineteen markets. The consequence of this is that it is not possible for us to receive vital or profound injury from any of these operations abroad. Do you see the alarm that prevails in France, the alarm that prevails in Germany?—they threaten retaliation against the M'Kinley tariff. Gentlemen, do not let us be led for one moment, upon any consideration, into the suicidal folly of talking or of dreaming of retaliation. Our trade has been hit again and again, as far as it is in the power of any one to hit it, by the reaction towards Protection which has marked the legislation of some countries during the last ten or fifteen years. Gentlemen, we do not deal with this country or with that country. We deal with mankind,—nothing more and nothing less than with mankind. We lament what we think the error of those who go on raising the prices against themselves—giving encouragement to sections of their own countrymen to bad and wasteful production, instead of careful and cheap production, preferring some selected portion of the capitalists of the country to the broad general interests of the entire people of the land. We lament, we grieve over it, but do not let us retaliate. Rely upon it, there is energy, there is skill, there is capital, there are plenty of means and resources for this great commercial country to hold and keep its place, perhaps to an indefinite time, in the great markets of the world

Now, why do I say that we ought not to think of retaliation? There is something very plausible in the idea of retaliating for what some people call a wrong. I will not enter into the question whether it is a wrong or not, because I think every country is competent to enact whatever it pleases—whether it be wise or whether it be unwise—in the matter of commercial legislation. It is called sometimes a war of tariffs, and I think that is not at all an unjust description. Shall we enter into that war? I think not, gentlemen. The favourite proposition is what is called an Imperial Zollverein—that is to say, that the whole of the British Empire shall have a common tariff—I doubt very much if the whole of the British Empire would consent to it—but that is another matter—shall have one common tariff in favour of all the subjects of the Queen, and as against all foreign countries whatsoever. Now, there are a thousand objections, I think. This objection strikes one at first that it would be very hard indeed upon those countries which pursue with us a system of free and open trade to inflict punishment upon them because a particular country—though a very great country, and though a country most closely united to us in feeling and interest—has adopted a restrictive system of commerce. But I do not stand upon that. I wish to point out how the case really comes before us. The effect of an Imperial Zollverein would be undoubtedly to some extent to enlarge our commerce with our Colonies and Dependencies, but then it would also infallibly be to contract our commerce with the rest of the world. Now, which of these two is the more important? They are both of them vast; they are both of them of enormous consequence, and I admit—and I am very glad to think—that our commerce with India and the Colonies increases rather the faster of the two. But look at the amount, because, in the long run, the amount of a trade is a pretty good criterion of its value. The amount of our Colonial—our Imperial—commerce is 187 millions in the year, taking all imports and exports of all descriptions of goods together. But the amount of our foreign commerce is 554 millions in the year. Now, gentlemen, I think you will recognise at once that

it would indeed be a doubtful, or rather not at all a doubtful policy—a great deal worse than a doubtful policy—a most injurious policy—to clog the action of British energy and enterprise on the market of 554 millions in the year even for the purpose of enlarging that action in the market of one-third portion of that amount.

Well, gentlemen, let us look—it is a question, I think, of very great interest—let us look at the effect of Protection on the markets of the United States itself. I now hold in my hand a letter—an extremely intelligent letter—of a purely practical kind, not relative to Dundee business, but relative to the business of the town of Bradford, and it may be well to quote from it, because the town of Bradford has business which will probably be more affected by the M'Kinley tariff than any of the other great centres of industry in this country. Now, one thing that the writer of this letter points out—showing the poisonous and venomous character of the enactment—he points out the unjust and disproportionate pressure of the protective system upon the lower classes of the community who use the coarser fabrics. He tells us that upon the higher worsteds which go from Bradford—or some of them—the rate of protection in America will be about 70 per cent.; and that on the lower classes of similar goods used by the poorer portion of the population the rate will be 120 per cent. Is not that a monstrous injustice to the mass of the population? We should say so in Great Britain. I know not whether it can be otherwise in America. But what is the next effect? And this, I think, is a very interesting observation. The writer of this letter holds that a manufacture raises its character in proportion as you can direct it towards the finer classes of goods. The finer classes of goods allow of the pursuit of beauty and of the cultivation of taste in a degree greater than the coarser classes of goods. But if the coarser classes of goods in America are protected at 120 per cent., while the finer are protected only at 70 per cent., it follows that the American manufacturer will, of course, direct his attention to the coarser classes of goods. And, as the writer of this letter argues—and I for one do not know the answer to

the argument—the effect of that is that you degrade and depress the character of American manufactures. That is the effect in America. But what is the effect in Great Britain?—the exact reverse. Americans must get paid for their exports. We want their commodities, we want their corn, we want their cheese, we want their oil, and I know not how many things that they produce. They send us these goods; they wish to send them, and they will send them, and they must be paid for them. And they must take payment either in British manufactures or in foreign and colonial manufactures, which we have bought in other countries by exporting our goods. But they must, and they do, take payment largely in British manufactures. Therefore what will be the effect of this M'Kinley tariff in England? The effect of it will be to direct the attention of the British manufacturer towards the production of the finer classes of goods, because these bear the least intolerable protective rate in America. And consequently the effect will be to elevate and improve the taste of our manufacturers, as well as to spur and stimulate their ingenuity, by directing them to the necessity of the most economical production. Gentlemen, that is a very interesting argument of the writer of this letter, in respect to the immediate effect of this M'Kinley tariff.

But I want to apply another test, to show how ill judged are the arguments of those in this country who think that we have so very much to fear from the restrictive commercial systems of foreign countries. Gentlemen, I have referred to the statistical documents which exhibit to us the course of trade in this country. I showed you that even in 1874 America taxed 1500 articles. Now, is it the fact that since 1874 our trade with America—though America has gone on tightening and tightening her protective system—is it the fact that she has diminished our trade? Quite otherwise. I will give you the figures in the shortest possible form, dating from the period I have named, and taking first the year 1875. The five years from 1875 to 1879 gives us an average export to America of British manufactures amounting to 21½ millions sterling. Then I take the last five years—1885 to 1889—and those give us an

average export of 33 millions sterling, or an augmentation of 65 per cent., while the total foreign trade of the country in that period has only augmented 12 per cent. There is a magnificent passage in a speech of Mr Burke, when he was narrating horrors that had taken place through the folly and tyranny of rulers in India, where he described the history of a particular district as the history of a prolonged and obstinate contest between the folly of man—the wickedness of man—and the bounty of Providence to uphold and to redeem. I will not talk of folly and wickedness with regard to this great and friendly people. Yet we cannot help thinking that we know that either they are right and we are wrong, or we are right and they are wrong; and as we believe that we are right, we must believe that they are wrong. And it is a great comfort to us to see that, even although we may think them very wrong, yet there are causes at work which are stronger than the will, the fancy, the caprice, or the selfishness of man, or than human error in any of its forms, which are continually opening more and more the gates of friendly intercourse, and multiplying and enlarging the benefits which commerce confers, both morally and economically, on the nations engaged in it.

Only one word more, my Lord Provost and Gentlemen, lest you should think your youngest burgess is given to be rather garrulous, and is guilty of the charge sometimes made against those who have attained a certain period of life—and therefore I will only give you one word more as to what has happened. I have shown you how, under Protection—and in defiance of Protection—trade between the United Kingdom and the United States of America has been rapidly and greatly increasing. How is this in Dundee? Has Dundee suffered from the protective system? It may have suffered in this, that if there had been a free system the extension of the business of Dundee would have been greater still. But the extension of the business of Dundee itself, even under the protective system, is a great extension. I find that in the very last year—and there can be no doubt about the authority of the statement—I believe it has come from no less high authority than the respected Consul



of the United States in this city—I find in the very last year there was an increase in the value of British exports from Dundee to the United States amounting to £133,000, or about 7 per cent.; and if I take the two last years and compare them with what came before, there is an increase in value from Dundee alone of £385,000 in value, or about 25 per cent.

Well, gentlemen, my object has been, not by making a plausible case, but by going if I can a little to the heart of the matter, to dispel, so far as you who hear me, or so far as any who may read me, are concerned, the vain apprehension that we are to receive substantial or general damage from any of these proceedings, be they what they may. Any injury that is done to us will be comparatively small, and will be but the minutest fraction of that which is done by the protecting country to its own Population. That word Protection is a miserable misnomer. Call it oppression—call it a delusion—call it a fraud. I wish I could supplant that name Protection and give some name for it that is nearer to the truth.

It is perfectly true that America is the country which, of all the countries in the world, can the best afford to try this strange, and, to me, astonishing experiment; and why? First of all, because her territory is so large that she is a world in herself, and the amount of free trade within America herself creates itself a vast and healthy commerce, with which nothing can interfere. In the second place, America has the advantage of a natural wealth, both in regard to soil and in regard to minerals, such as perhaps has never yet in any case of a great country been known upon the surface of the globe. There is also, gentlemen, another advantage that America possesses—greater, I believe, than either of these two, and it is this—America grew up to hardy manhood under the influence of pressure and restriction—not commercial restriction—but natural restriction—imposed by nature in its youth. A great scarcity of labour was the characteristic of American industry for generations after the foundations of the Colonies, and that scarcity of labour naturally made it a practice of the people to study the means of what is called labour-

saving; and that labour-saving became a tradition of the country, and entered profoundly into the habits and character of the people, so that now their remarkable position is this, that with the vast wealth which nature offers them in the mine, and in the field, they likewise have a capacity which, at this moment, I believe to be the first and the highest upon earth, of reaping what they have to reap, of digging what they have to dig, in the most economical manner that has ever been known to mankind. And, gentlemen, it is the possession of these enormous advantages which helps to disguise the truth from American reasoners, because the free traders in America—I rejoice to say a most powerful body, for whom possibly a signal triumph may be reserved—make the arguments that we make in this country, and the answer to them is, “You tell us that the system of Protection is ruinous, but look at the vast progress and the vast wealth of the country.” Certainly the country advances,—certainly the country advances in wealth. And do not we know many a case in this country of a rich man who wastes a great deal of his money, and yet he continues to be a rich man, because so much remains behind? There is a good story of the heir-apparent to a ducal house. The agent of the estates went to the duke, and said, “My lord duke, I think it right to inform you that the Marquis of So-and-so is spending a great deal;” and the duke looked the agent in the face, and said, “Is he? I hope he is, for he will have a great deal to spend.” Though America may be wasting a great deal of money, she has a great deal to waste. It is a question not of absolute but of comparative retrogression, but it is a fearful waste of the resources by which her people ought to be made strong and happy—that is, in our view. But what I hope and what I venture to advise is that we do not complain so much of the injury to ourselves—first of all, because it is impolitic, and secondly, because the fact of injury would be in the main untrue. Substantial injury cannot be done to us, though occasional injury may here and there result. No, gentlemen, let us leave that great people to fight the fight of argument among themselves. If we have faith in truth, both economical

and moral truth—if we have faith in it—let us have faith in it on the west of the Atlantic as well as on the east. Let us rely upon it that the light will come in upon the dark places—that a people so acute, a people with so remarkable a history, and a people of destinies yet more wonderful and grand than the history which it has already recorded—they will find their way to the results that are best for themselves, and they will find it more easily, more readily, and more effectually in proportion as they are left more respectfully to themselves, in proportion as we show, that much as we value their commerce, we value their friendship and regard still more; and that every one of us looks forward with fondness to the time when the great English-speaking people of the world shall exercise a moral influence, probably unbounded in all experience, over the fortunes and interests of mankind. Let us who are now laying the foundations of that future Imperial, and more than Imperial, unity, by exhibiting the same regard for American liberty as we have for our own, by showing that we do not pretend to be the masters of Americans in reasoning or in anything else, but that we trust entirely to America's own good sense and the vigour of her understanding, to the great opportunities before her, the pressure and the true sense of her own interest, to adopt at length a course of policy which will be the best for herself and the best for humankind. Gentlemen, I thank you for the patience with which you have heard me in this crowded assembly. I will no longer trespass on your time.

## ART AND INDUSTRY

DUNDEE, OCTOBER 29, 1890

MR PRESIDENT, MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN—I proceed to discharge that duty which is the simplest in the world, and certainly not the least agreeable, which has been imposed upon me by your President, and to declare the present exhibition to be opened. Having done that, is it right that I should detain you from looking at the exhibition by any remarks of my own? Your exhibition is, I am quite sure, full of beauty. I will not pretend to pass a deliberate judgment after a very cursory inspection, but I will say that I have seen many works of art even in the course of my walk through the rooms, which have impressed me very favourably indeed, and I cannot think that any observations I may make can have a beauty in them at all to compare with that of the works upon the walls. Therefore, you will understand that anything I say on this occasion is not at all to enter into competition with it, as I know that in that I should be defeated. I suppose I may, in a few sentences, express to you opinions that will show that I am not discharging this duty as a perfunctory obligation. It is most pleasant for me to be brought into contact, even for a moment, with an exhibition of this kind. I cannot consider your exhibition as apart from your permanent picture gallery.

Exhibitions, I think, have been tried—and have been successfully tried—in various towns of the country at an earlier date than that at which they have aspired to be the possessors of permanent picture galleries. The whole thing is a question of progress from year to year. I need not say that I can recollect the time when I do not think there was such a thing in the whole country as a local annual exhibition of pictures,

and much more do I doubt whether there was then such a thing as a permanent gallery belonging to any one of our towns. Even in London, our wants and ideas were very modest as to their scale. I rejoice to say that there were admirable painters in this country in the early part of the century with whom I was familiar, but the scale of the exhibition was extremely small. I dare say—I am sure—you are aware that the annual exhibition in London has developed or split itself into three, that each of these is attended by great and increasing crowds of people, and that, in fact, it seems hardly possible to satiate the appetite which exists throughout the country. It is most satisfactory to find similar dispositions extending into the provinces, and I am not at all surprised to find that Scotland holds a very foremost place in the foundation of these institutions. In speaking of Scotland, gentlemen, and Scotchmen, I may depart for one moment from the straight path before me to mention the name of a Scotchman—Mr Carnegie. Mr Carnegie is not a Forfarshire man, but he is the next thing to it, for he himself has placed upon record in his very remarkable works, his devotion to the town of Dunfermline, where he was born. It is not only his activity, but it is the manner in which he has preached, and, still more in earnest, which he has practised the munificent devotion of vast funds collected by his energy and intelligence to the foundation of great institutions for the benefit of his fellow-countrymen. Many of these may be known to some of you, but I am in a condition to state it as a matter of fact. He is, as you know, a great ironmaster in Pennsylvania—the greatest ironmaster, I believe, in the world. He has his works not very far from the town of Pittsburg, the centre of the mining industry of that great state. Mr Carnegie has endowed the town of Pittsburg, partly for the purposes of a library, and partly for the purposes of art galleries, with the sun—not to come after his death, but out of his pocket; paid over the counter, so to speak—the sum of £400,000. That is an instance of bounty, and I cannot but believe that there is bounty here. We have many instances of it. You have instances of it. You have instances of it, I believe, in Dundee.

There are splendid instances elsewhere, and I cannot but believe that it is contagious. The disposition that produces it is contagious in its character; and if we have wants still unsupplied notwithstanding, we shall see the movement for the supply of those wants continuing and increasing in its rate and efficiency, so that what has been almost a marvel to the men of our generation will come to be a truism and a commonplace to those who follow them. I am greatly pleased to find such a collection has been made in Dundee for many more reasons than one. But one of the reasons undoubtedly is, that the industries of the country will derive enormous advantage from the cultivation of art. Beauty is an element of immense pecuniary value. The traditional cultivation of taste and production of beauty in industrial objects, is better known—best of all known, perhaps—in Italy, and very well known in France. We may still be some steps behind in many departments in that respect, but there is not a doubt that in the enormous commerce of France, the beauty of the objects produced counts from year to year for a great many millions sterling, and those millions sterling would fade into their air were the appreciation of beauty and the power of producing beautiful objects to be taken away, which, happily, it hardly can from such a people. It is an element of immense commercial value. Let us look abroad—let us take our lesson from nature, for, after all, we cannot go to a better source, or as good a source, as to the works of God. The Almighty has provided this earth with the beautiful, and made it fair and beautiful, and has made the beauty of the land in which we are appointed to be born, and in which we live, an important instrument in stirring up in us, and for confirming in us that devoted attachment to our country, which, I hope, under the name of patriotism or whatever other name—which, I believe, always has been a pointed characteristic of individuals, and which, I trust, always will be a marked and pointed characteristic of those who will succeed them in following generations. The Almighty has given us a lesson in this respect in making his works beautiful, showing that he suggests to us to make our

works beautiful, humbly, and reverently, but yet believing that if in every department of life we are following that example, He will regard it with favour, and crown it with His blessing. The question arises, Is there incapacity in the people of this country to compete with other nations and races in the production of beautiful objects? I have told you that I think we are behind in certain respects; but I hold that there is no such incapacity, and I hold this partly on this account—the enormous progress which I myself have witnessed. I assure you that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that at the time when I was a boy and a youth of ten or fifteen years of age, there was hardly anything that was beautiful produced in this country. And I remember at about that period of my life—I believe I was eighteen—I was taken over to see a silk factory in Macclesfield. At that time Mr Huskisson—whose name ought always to be remembered with respect amongst all sound economists—and the Government of Lord Liverpool had been making the first efforts not to break down—that was reserved for their happier followers—but to lessen, to modify, or perhaps I should say mitigate, a little, if possible, the protective system. Down to the period of Mr Huskisson silk pocket handkerchiefs from France were prohibited. They were largely smuggled, and no gentleman went over to France without, if he could manage it, in his pockets, his purse, his portmanteau, his hat, or his greatcoat, bringing back handkerchiefs and gloves. But Mr Huskisson carried a law in which, in lieu of this prohibition of these French articles, a duty of 30 per cent. was imposed upon them, and I assure you it is in my recollection that there was a keener detestation of Mr Huskisson and a more violent passion aroused against him in consequence of that mild initial measure than ever was associated in the other camp—in the Protectionist camp—with the career of Cobden and Bright. Well, I was taken to this manufactory, and they produced the English silk handkerchiefs which they were in the habit of making, and which they thought it so cruel to see competed with by the silk handkerchiefs of France, although, even before they were allowed to

compete, they had to pay the heavy fine of 30 per cent. on the value. And it was in that first visit to a manufactory in Macclesfield that—I will not say I became a Free Trader, for it was ten or fifteen years after that before I entered into the full faith of that policy; but from what I then saw there dawned upon my mind the first ray of light; and what I thought when they showed me these handkerchiefs was, how detestable they really are, and what in the world can be the object of the policy of coaxing, nursing, coddling up manufactories to produce goods such as these, which you ought to be ashamed of exhibiting? Well, there is a very different state of things now. One of the consequences, as you are probably aware, of introducing free trade, was that even in the cotton trade—I think it is the cotton trade that I have specially in view—in the cotton trade, where formerly the practice had been to import, by a one-sided process, the French cotton patterns for printing cotton—even in that trade, after a few years had been given to the opening of the trade, that one-sided progress became two-sided, and the French patterns came from Mulhausen to Manchester, and the English patterns went from Manchester to Mulhausen, because there were men then with an open market, who endeavoured to infuse new beauty into a large number of the industrial objects of this country—in our glass, in our porcelain, in our earthenware, in our tissues without end—and I hope and believe not the less in the great linen manufactures for which Dundee is so famous, that the introduction of beauty is becoming a regular portion of the industrial art. Well, there is no reason, when we look to our history, why we should despond or suppose that we are not to attain all the purposes—all the good purposes—that beauty and the study of beauty are meant to attain.

Now, shall I shock you if I tell you what, perhaps, is partly only a personal opinion of my own? The study of beauty has several very formidable enemies. One of them, of course, is haste in production, carelessness in production. Sometimes the desire for cheapness makes people think you cannot have cheapness and beauty together. But the parti-



cular enemy which I think is one of the most formidable of all to the true comprehension and true pursuit of beauty is that thing which is known under the name of fashion. That may seem strange to the young gentlemen who want to be smart in their dress. I will not speak of young ladies. To them I have no doubt it will sound as if I was using language certainly rash, and perhaps almost profane. What is fashion? Gentlemen and ladies, if the ladies have anything to do with it—I won't say whether it is so or not—what is fashion? Fashion of dress is perpetual change. Wherever there is perpetual change, if it is to be justifiable or if it is to be useful, there ought to be perpetual progress. But fashion is not perpetual progress; fashion is a zigzag. Fashion is a wheel that whirls round and round, and by-and-by, after a fashion has been left—after it has been discarded—if you have only a little patience to wait long enough, you will find you will get back to it. Ladies and gentlemen, you are young and I am old; I have seen this wheel of fashion going round and round always puzzling you, like a firework wheel, but always landing in a total negation of progress and with a strong tendency to the substitution of mere caprice and mere display for the real pursuit of beauty.

Of course, I believe that the pursuit of the beautiful is a thing founded on permanent principles, and I am glad to say that in Scotland you have had some authors who have written—and written with great ability—to show that the principles of beauty may be more difficult to discern, and to reduce to *formula*, but they are as permanent in themselves, and as certain as the principles of arithmetic and mathematics. Certainly, if we look at variations—fine art is not in the same way governed by fashion—we know that art springs up, advances, and reaches a climax in a particular country, and then, usually, more or less declines. But art is always aiming at the exhibition more and more of permanent and changeless principles, and depend upon it we ought to look as much as possible, in the production of beautiful things—we ought to look to those elements of beauty which are solid and permanent, and do not

change from age to age. Is that a wild fancy? Why is it that we admire the architecture of the Greeks? Why do we admire the sculpture of the Greeks? Because we know that it was given to that race by Providence to attain to a more just, true, and strict, and much more general perception of the permanent principles of beauty than perhaps has been ever given to any race. At least, if they have a rival, they are nearly without a rival, upon the earth, and the wonderful thing is to see among the Greeks this feeling diffused. If you are told that you are a provincial people, take your lesson from provincial Greece. Bœotia was nothing but a little subdivision of Greece—a very small sub-division of a very small country. However, it had the advantage of being next to Attica, and there was a small town of the name of Tanagra, from which, within the last few years, were exposed, in the Athenian market, almost for nothing, little statuettes. They immediately found appreciation, for the Greeks of the present day have, I can assure you, a great many of the qualities that belonged to their illustrious ancestors, and now, in the sunlight of freedom, they are maturing and developing these qualities. But these little statuettes came immediately into appreciation. But it was found that, though they were only taken out of the tombs of an obscure town almost unknown to history, of a town hardly big enough to secure for itself some third-rate railway-station, if it now existed, these statuettes were instinct with the spirit of beauty from head to foot, in figure and in costume. Many of them—a good many of them, I think—are now in the Museum in London, and serve to illustrate both the great function that the Greeks fulfilled in former times, and likewise the manner in which that which is truly beautiful never could go out of fashion if we were sound and sagacious, and consistent in our view of acting on those principles.

I do not think Scotland has any reason to despond in this matter. I rejoice to think what a large number of persons have grown up in Scotland during the present century to adorn the history of British art—I cannot recollect them all. You had Wilkin, you had Leslie, you had Dyce, you had Phillip,

and a great many more. You have at the present moment a portrait painter practising in Edinburgh, one or two of whose works I have seen—I mean Mr Reid—which are perfectly entitled to take their place among the historical portraits of the world. Therefore, it is remarkable, gentlemen, and I tell you why. Because the primary reputation of Scotland has always been for solid qualities. A Scotchman is logical, a Scotchman is canny, a Scotchman has many qualities of a beautiful and useful kind indeed. But, observe, the Scotchman, beside all these things, is imaginative, and there are not wanting proofs of that. I will not now dilate upon the name of Burns; I will not now dilate upon the name, in the opinion of some, and in my own opinion, I think, more illustrious—that of Sir Walter Scott. I will simply point to the achievements of Scotchmen in the field of art, and the proportion that prevails between Scotch artists and English artists relatively to the population of the two countries, and say that Scotchmen enter freely into this competition in the study and pursuit of beauty. I am quite confident it is a competition in which they never will be worsted. On an occasion so interesting as this I will release you, ladies and gentlemen, for the purpose of the far more edifying occupation of examining the works on the wall, rather than listening to the superficial and stray remarks which I have been making.

# THE RELIGIOUS DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL

HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 4, 1891

Mr Gladstone moved the Second Reading of the Religious Disabilities Removal Bill which he had brought in. His motion was defeated by 256 to 224.

SIR, when it fell to my choice to undertake the charge of a Bill for removing from the Statute-book of this country an anomaly, an injustice, and a discredit, I was in hopes that it would only be necessary for me to spend a few minutes in introducing the Bill to the notice of this House; but those hopes have been so far disappointed as to make it necessary for me, I fear, to trespass at somewhat greater length on your time. Murmurings and mutterings there have been in various quarters, as was to be expected. We have just seen presented petitions which filled the arms and taxed the muscular strength and fibre of those who presented them, and one of them appeared to me, sir, to conceal within itself, under the appearance of a mere roller, what might in fact be a formidable weapon of offence. Not only have we these manifestations from quarters which are usually wakeful in these matters, and where everything in the nature of a disability, though it be the merest rag and merest shred, most woefully torn and tattered, yet remains dear to the English heart; but there have been rumours even with respect to the intentions of her Majesty's Government—I cannot tell whether they may be true or not; but I know that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1867 took part along with myself<sup>1</sup> in pleading for the opening of the most difficult of these offices, and the one with respect to which the greatest objection was taken, and I doubt not he intends to pursue

<sup>1</sup> In a debate on the Oath and Office Bill, April 9, 1867.

the same course in the present debate. As to his colleagues, the right hon. gentleman<sup>1</sup> now has upon his left one whom I have always regarded as the prop and pillar of everything that deserved to be overthrown and removed. I am afraid there is cause why I cannot confine myself within the ten minutes I had contemplated as sufficient time for explaining the nature and character of the Bill; but I will endeavour not to be unreasonable in my demand upon the time of the House. The first point that I have to mention is one of a very singular nature.

I believe it to be in law seriously doubtful whether Roman Catholics are at this moment disabled from holding the offices of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Lord Chancellor of England. The argument in the main may be stated in a few moments. The Roman Catholic Relief Act, the 10th of George IV., does not impose upon Roman Catholics in so many words disability for holding those offices, but it does provide that no Roman Catholic shall be entitled to hold them "otherwise than as he may be by law now entitled." What was the legal position before the passing of the Act of 1829? Every subject of her Majesty is presumably entitled to hold every office under the Crown, but in the case of the Roman Catholic he was obviously and effectually barred by the Test Act. I am not aware, and I believe some good lawyers are not aware—I believe I may quote among others the eminent man who now holds the post of Lord Chief Justice of England, not with reference to any judicial decision, but with regard to opinions given in this House and supported by argument—that there was no other disability except that of the Test Act. The Test Act was removed by repeal in the year 1863. I do not enter now into the argument further because, on the other hand, it is seriously contested by other lawyers whether that repeal has been effectual to qualify Roman Catholics for those offices. At any rate I believe this is true, that when Parliament repealed the Test Act it had no distinct and specific intention of opening those offices to Roman Catholics. Well, sir, it is quite plain

<sup>1</sup> Mr Chaplin.

that if the law is doubtful it ought to be made clear. It is quite plain that no person charged by her Majesty with the solemn duty of forming a Government in this country could venture to recommend to her Majesty this or that individual for either of these great offices while there was the smallest doubt attaching to the law which would place the validity of his acts in controversy. Consequently, I thought it my duty not to be deterred from prosecuting this Bill, and I think that in arriving at that decision I shall so far have the unanimous assent of the House, if, indeed, the opponents of the Bill be in a frame and temper of mind in which it is possible for them to assent to any proposition whatever issuing from my unworthy lips.

I will say one word on the drafting of the Bill. When this Bill was drafted, it was drafted, as it was thought, in conformity rather with precedent than with abstract ideas, and the consequence is that it lays down conditions with respect to the discharge of certain functions which it may be held are in the nature of religious tests. Whether they are so or not I do not know—I do not undertake at this moment, at any rate, to decide—but I certainly, and I think my right hon. and hon. friends<sup>1</sup> who are immediately responsible for the Bill, have come to the conclusion that it would be better not to embarrass ourselves with any considerations of that kind. Our object is simply to remove the anomaly, which is supposed to exclude, and which perhaps excludes, certain subjects of her Majesty from holding certain offices under the Crown, and to make provision, or to be certain that satisfactory provision is made, with regard to any duty ecclesiastical in its character, or not purely civil, that attaches to either of those offices. We think that those duties may be handed over with advantage to such person as her Majesty, under the provisions of the Bill, may be pleased to select, and that it is not necessary for us to have any reference whatever to religious profession in the description of such person. Consequently, the course I should propose to

<sup>1</sup> Mr Campbell-Bannerman, Mr Colin Morley, Sir Horace Davey, and Mr Asquith.

take is this. If the House is pleased, as I hope it will be pleased, to read this Bill a second time, I should, with the consent of the House, revert to the convenient practice which I have not known to be applied for the past few years to any Bill of great importance, but which used to be applied to Bills even of great importance with great advantage to the country—namely, the practice of passing a Bill through Committee *pro forma*, so as to present it in that form which the promoters, with the consent of the House, thought the proper form in which to submit it, reserving the substantial Committee to be taken after the report of the Bill from that Committee *pro forma*.

Sir, I must next refer to a matter personally affecting myself, which I am extremely reluctant to introduce to the notice of the House, only because such personal matters are not fit or convenient for the general consideration of the House. But the publications I have seen on this subject make it quite certain that gentlemen foraging after topics in connection with this Bill will fall back upon those personal questions which always, it must be observed, have the advantage of creating a lively interest in the House at the moment. A pamphlet has been put into my hands within the last five minutes, entitled *Mr Gladstone Exposed*. I have not yet had the opportunity of profiting by the wisdom and learning which no doubt it contains, but it seems to me that I must relieve myself from what I know, by the inspection of other documents relating to this Bill, will be thought a very convenient and advantageous topic on this occasion. The argument is that I, of all persons, am not the man to propose this Bill. Well, sir, I will take the liberty of exactly inverting that argument, and saying that so far as all previous declarations are concerned, I, of all persons, am the man to propose it. The allegation which I have seen made is that I myself am a man who, by certain pamphlets published in 1874-75, proved that Roman Catholics were not fit to be intrusted with the discharge of high and responsible duties, inasmuch as their allegiance was impaired by certain tenets of their religion. I wish to state the case fairly, and my

answer is this—it is perfectly distinct, and I will bring it to the test of distinct words. It is perfectly true that I did impeach in 1874 certain declarations of the See of Rome as dangerous to the civil allegiance of those who adopted and concurred in them, and I invited, in a pamphlet termed *Vatican Decrees*, my Roman Catholic fellow-subjects to give assurance to their fellow-countrymen on the question whether they did or did not profess a full, entire, and undivided allegiance.

The effect of that pamphlet was to draw forth a considerable number of replies, and I myself, having published the tract in November 1874, and having read and considered those replies published a further tract termed *Vaticanism* in February 1875 and in that tract I inserted a passage which I will now read to the House, but which evidently, for some reason or other, has never met the eyes of a single person connected with the opposition to this Bill, or any officer of any institution that has been concerned in getting up that opposition. A blindness, such as was inflicted on a sorcerer in the New Testament, seems to have struck them when they were engaged in the perusal of that particular page of the book, and I am now obliged to appeal to another sense—namely, the sense of hearing.

What was the conclusion at which I then arrived with regard to the allegiance of my Roman Catholic fellow-subjects? In page 14 of the pamphlet termed *Vaticanism*, published in February 1875, will be found these words: “I cannot but say that the immediate purpose of my appeal has been attained in so far that the loyalty of our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects in the mass remains evidently untainted and secure.” And, sir, it is because I am the man who upon examination and challenge have deliberately—sixteen years ago—announced that, in my opinion, whatever might be the claims of the Roman See, their loyalty was untainted and secure, I am the very man, if I have no other qualification, to be so far at least qualified to propose the Bill now before the House.

Let me endeavour to impress upon the House that that is the whole question. Unless you can show that the loyalty of the Roman Catholic is tainted, you have no right to inflict a dis-



ability upon him. I affirm that the opponents of this Bill have no *locus standi* failing that. They must attack that loyalty, and unless they can attack that loyalty with effect, they are contradicting the principles of our Constitution, old and new, the principles of our statute law, and the principles which we have inscribed on that statute law in the very clearest terms. Is that doubted?

I affirm, and I do not intend to give it as my individual opinion, as a mere dictum proceeding from me, as it would proceed without the smallest authority—my affirmation is that the principles of the British Constitution admit and allow of no civil disabilities on account of religious opinion. Is that principle clearly declared in our law, or is it not? I will read a very few words from the statute of 1867, chapter 75, from the preamble—a statute<sup>1</sup> highly creditable to the Parliament which passed it, and which was passed and took its place in the laws of this country when a Conservative Government was in office, thus supplying a good omen of what we ought to expect on the present occasion. That statute begins with these words: “Whereas certain of her Majesty’s subjects are now, on the ground of their religious belief, subject to civil disabilities,” and so forth, “and it is expedient to remove such disabilities, and to substitute one uniform oath for the several oaths now required to be taken by different classes of her Majesty’s subjects.” Pray observe who are the persons in contemplation. Not certain selected persons, distinguished either by property, rank, influence, or religious profession, or by local habitation. They are inhabitants of these small islands; they are the vast and almost innumerable populations in almost every quarter of the globe who bear alike the burden of allegiance to her Majesty, and who together approach 300,000,000, and constitute one-fifth part of the population of the globe. Pray observe this, for it lies at the very root of the question; it is no selected portion of her Majesty’s subjects whom the Act has in contemplation. The declaration is clear; the grievance is stated at the beginning of the preamble, that certain of her Majesty’s subjects

<sup>1</sup> The Oath and Oath Act.

are now under disability on account of religious opinions, and the result is as clear and broad, for it is to provide that one uniform oath be taken by all persons, "in lieu of several oaths now taken by different classes of her Majesty's subjects." I hope that there will be no controversy on this question of principle, that our law has for its basis the universal qualification—unless there be exceptions, and the exception I am coming to—of all her Majesty's subjects of all religious opinions in all quarters of the globe, wherever they may be found, and there is no power of lodging a case against a Bill which aims at an emancipation or enfranchisement of that kind, except in the one only narrow path of impeaching the allegiance of some portion of them, which impeachment I have shown, from the passage read to the House, I, at any rate, have emphatically and explicitly renounced. Such is the principle of our Constitution.

Let me point out that in this case to except is to proscribe. It is a question of proscription with which I have now to deal. I will not enter into the question of whether proscription is or is not persecution, but I think that causeless proscription is persecution. It is the only kind of persecution that remains open or accessible to the lovers of that amiable pastime. But I say that exception is proscription, and I want to know what is the cause of proscription, what is the view of it taken by our Constitution, and what is the cause of proscription if any proscription is to be maintained. Now, sir, what are the apparent causes of proscription under our Constitution? Everybody will say the Crown. Some people have taken a very broad view of this thing indeed. I possess a letter from one who is at least a courteous correspondent, who says: "Sir,—Your Bill is the first step towards relighting the fires of Smithfield." It is a much more moderate statement to say that it is the first step towards altering the conditions of the succession to the Crown. Sir, it has nothing whatever to do with the succession to the Crown, and I will tell you why. In the first place, the Crown is not concerned in any of these statutes, and no law has been laid down with respect to the Crown such as was laid down (but not for the

Crown) in the statute of 1867. The Crown is not open to competition. If the Crown were open to competition between A and B, and it was found that A was the man best fitted to wear it, but could not be appointed because he was a Roman Catholic, and therefore the Protestant must be appointed, then you would have achieved the first step towards proving an analogy. But there is no competition. The Crown has a single function, which is to be discharged by a single person. But more, it is a mistake to suppose that the laws relating to the Crown inflict a proscription on a particular class of believers. The whole principle is entirely different on that point. These proscriptions are negative in form. They do not require a person to believe; they punish a person for belief. On the contrary, with regard to the Crown, what the law requires is that the person wearing the Crown shall be a Christian believer of a particular profession. It is not merely—though it has constantly been so called—a requirement that the Crown shall be worn by a Protestant; it must also be worn by a person communicating in the Church of England. This is a distinction. This distinction between requiring a positive belief and proscribing a positive belief is a distinction which has become famous and historical through the writings of Mr Burke on the penal laws of Ireland. Every one must have in his memory those immortal writings of Mr Burke upon Irish history and law, in which he contrasts the Irish and English penal laws, but the Irish especially, with the persecutions of old times, to the disadvantage of these penal laws; for, he says, the object of these persecutions was to drive people into some religion which it was thought it would be for their advantage to profess, but the object of the penal laws was not to drive or induce or bring people into any belief whatever, but only to drive them out of a certain belief, only to ascertain that they did not believe. That is exactly the principle of the little miserable shred and tatter of proscription which I now invite the House to sweep away. Now, with regard to the question of the Crown, this is not the occasion for me to give any opinion at all. It is a very high constitutional question, which, in my

opinion, it would be very unwise to disturb. Its abstract merits constitute a subject and a field so wide that it is totally unsuited for the present limited discussion, and I pass it by by saying that I do not believe that the present settlement is regarded as irrational or creates discontent, and I, for my part, am not in any manner or degree prepared to touch it.

But I pass on to another class of exception which is noticed in the Relief Act of 1829. That is the exception of an office, the very existence of which, I suspect, is unknown to some members of this House, and I do not think it proves them to be men generally ill-informed if that be the case, though I have no doubt Scotchmen may be shocked at the utterance of so lax an opinion. This is the office held by Her Majesty's Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland, and that office is also excluded from tenure by a Roman Catholic. There are others known to our law, of which I shall not endeavour to give a catalogue.

But there are those in this House who are now acting as Ecclesiastical Commissioners—I myself have acted in that capacity, and certainly my recollection is that the law requires to be taken—I myself have taken—a declaration stating that I am a member of the Church of England. I believe I am right in that respect; I am not aware that the law has been changed; and it falls under the same category as the case of the High Commissioner to the General Assembly. But the principle of these limitations—though I do not think that they are limitations very necessary to be maintained—is clear, and cannot be said to be offensive, because the duties to be performed are not civil duties, and consequently the disability to perform them is not a civil disability.

With regard to the Regency of this country I will only say that it is treated by the Act of 1829 as an appendage to the provisions of the law relating to the succession to the Throne, and I do not see that there is anything unreasonable in the provisions of the Act. Then these proscriptions are not proscriptions in either case attaching to the Crown; they lie in a totally different sphere, because they are not affecting the discharge of

duties properly civil. With regard to the question of the Crown, I wish to avail myself of an authority which, not inconsiderable in itself, I think ought to have weight with gentlemen on the other side of the House.

I daresay we shall hear in to-day's debate that I am touching the Constitution of this country. [Ministerial cheers.] Yes, I thought so; I endeavoured to get that cheer. I wish to say that when these questions were raised in 1867, Mr Disraeli took part in that debate, and expressly said that he approved relatively to the circumstances of all the restraints imposed upon the tenure of these offices by the Act of 1829, but he did not hold—on the contrary, he denied—that they were any part of the Constitution of the country; he treated them as principles with which you could deal without exposing yourselves to that reproach, which he deemed absurd. Having endeavoured to clear all obstacles away, I have arrived at the contemplation of this one solitary proscription which remains on the Statute-Book. I beg the House to contemplate it in all its beauty or in all its ugliness and deformity. What is this proscription? What offices does it affect? Out of the whole vast variety of employments under the Crown it affects only two. And why does it affect them? Now, let us try that. My point of departure is that you have no right, except on proof of disqualification, to impose these disabilities. You cannot call on me to prove competency or ability; the burden of proof is on those who deny and exclude, and the sole part open to you, the sole proposition on which you can found yourselves, is that the allegiance of Roman Catholics is doubtful or impeachable. Now, let us look at these cases.

I take first the Viceroyalty of Ireland, because I am told and believe that the consciences of gentlemen are less vividly affected with respect to the Viceroyalty of Ireland than with respect to that most sacred fortalice of the Constitution, that inner sanctuary and holy of holies, the Lord Chancellorship. I wish to take the opportunity of stating to my Scotch friends that I think, in virtue of their nationality, they ought to look out pretty sharply; for I am very considerably shocked to find in our statutes the

expression, "the Lord Chancellor of Great Britain." I am not aware in what sense the Lord Chancellor is termed the Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, and, as Member for Mid-Lothian, until I am better informed, I protest against that expression as an aggression analogous to the old raids across the Border—an attempt to place upon Scotland a servitude which we utterly repel. The "Lord Chancellor of Great Britain," I contend, should be "Lord Chancellor of England."

In 1867 the question was whether the Viceroy of Ireland ought to continue to be under a disability with respect to the profession of the Roman Catholic religion. I think Mr Disraeli, then Minister and leader of the House, took part in that debate. He denied that it was a constitutional principle to exclude a Roman Catholic; but he asserted that the Viceroy of Ireland had ecclesiastical duties to perform, the performance of which would hardly be compatible, so Lord Naas and Mr Disraeli contended, with the Roman Catholic religion. I wish to point out that he based his opposition to the proposal, so far as the Viceroyalty was concerned, entirely and exclusively upon a ground which has now altogether disappeared. When, happily, we passed the Act in 1869 to disestablish the Church in Ireland, we swept away all ground for disability in the shape of those ecclesiastical functions on the part of the Lord Lieutenant. It is for those who still contend that Roman Catholic ought to be excluded from this office to show why it ought to be done. Do not let them attempt to shelter themselves under the authority of Mr Disraeli. This office of the Viceroyalty of Ireland is, I believe, an office as purely civil at this moment as any office under the Crown. If there are any ecclesiastical functions, they are totally unknown to me. I do not believe in their existence. I have never heard them asserted to exist; and I submit that any principle which justifies your excluding a Roman Catholic from the office of Viceroy of Ireland is just as good and rational for excluding him from the office of Viceroy of Canada or India. Here you have, indeed, if anywhere, open to you a source of danger, for the Viceroy of Ireland, whatever he does, he does under our own eyes. The Viceroy of India, at a distance of

many thousands of miles, operating within the precincts of a Government of which we have only the most partial, rare, and occasional cognisance—if they want an exercise for their ingenuity in showing the dangers that arise from the discharge of civil duties by Roman Catholics, I would seriously advise hon. gentlemen opposite, and the gallant Colonel<sup>1</sup> who presented a petition, and others, to study carefully the Viceroyalty of India, and see whether they cannot in some manner or other obtain from the duties of that office, where responsibility is so indirect, and where the power of our watching is so incomplete, whether they cannot obtain a show of reason, or, at all events, a fairer show of reason for exclusion than any they can show in this case.

I go on now, sir, to the Lord Chancellorship. The objections to a Bill of this kind are but two, so far as I know. One is the doctrine that is set up to the effect that the Lord Chancellor is the Keeper of the King's or Queen's Conscience. Now, sir, what is the meaning and what is the value of that doctrine? There was a time when it was perfectly, absolutely, and literally true. I have not been able to find any distinct and consecutive history of the idea, but it appears to me very like the case of one of those streams which flow through certain strata on to the surface of the earth, and then, coming into other strata, are absorbed, covered over, and disappear. The Lord Chancellor was Keeper of the King's Conscience at the time when he was the head of the King's Chapels, and when, in virtue of that headship, he was, at a period long before the Reformation, private confessor to the Sovereign, and so he was literally and truly, or at any rate, distinctly, the Keeper of the King's conscience. At that time the Lord Chancellor was a very secondary person, for Lord Campbell or Blackstone, I do not remember which, informs us that at that period he was only sixth among great holders of office; and the head of the law at that period was not the Lord Chancellor, but the Chief Justiciary of the country. In course of time the Lord Chancellorship became important, and other offices dwindled, and the Chancellorship passed from the head of the King's Chapels into the hands of the Archbishop of

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Sandys.

Canterbury, or of some other great ecclesiastical functionary, and so remained until the reign of Henry VIII. He had at that time ceased to be Keeper of the King's Conscience, and there was no personal relation between them from that time onwards, so far as my information goes, and though I have endeavoured to inquire, as I have said, I can find no consecutive or full history of the case.

I believe that the doctrine entirely slipped until George III. wanted to intrigue against his own Prime Minister, Mr Pitt, either as regards Roman Catholic emancipation or some other matter. He consulted the Lord Chancellor of the Cabinet against the head of the Government, and he did it upon the pretence that the Lord Chancellor was Keeper of the King's Conscience, he knowing beforehand that this Keeper of the King's Conscience exactly coincided with the opinions he held. Now, as Keeper of the King's Conscience, are you prepared to replace Lord Halsbury in the position of private confessor to her Majesty? Are you prepared, and will you propose your Bill for that purpose, and let us see what we can make of it? But until you do that, and until you place your law upon this footing, do not talk any more about the Lord Chancellor being the Keeper of the Queen's Conscience.

But, then, sir, the Lord Chancellor is the possessor of great ecclesiastical patronage, and when I speak of ecclesiastical patronage, I speak of benefices; I do not include the appointment of chaplains and so forth, which may be considered civil appointments. But the Home Secretary is also possessed of ecclesiastical patronage. The patronage in the Isle of Man belongs to the Home Secretary, just in the same manner as ecclesiastical patronage of other descriptions belongs to the Prime Minister; and I rather believe, but of this I am not quite certain, that the Channel Islands are in the same category as the Isle of Man with respect to ecclesiastical patronage. We have had for five years a distinguished gentleman,<sup>1</sup> who, in the language of the law, professes the Roman Catholic religion, and fills the office of Home Secretary; nor can it be said that any



difficulty, or doubt, or debate, has arisen in consequence of his being by law invested with the discharge of that function. He has not corrected me about the Channel Islands, and I therefore assume the Channel Islands are in the same predicament as the Isle of Man. I am sure the Protestant Association ought to be much obliged to me for pointing out to their minds the existence of this great and frightful constitutional danger. I have been told that the right hon. gentleman, since he has held that office, has handed over to the Prime Minister the discharge of this duty of ecclesiastical patronage. I do not know whether that is so or not, and he does not appear disposed to give me any information.

Mr MATTHEWS—Since I have had the honour of holding the office of Home Secretary, I have never submitted any name whatever to the Queen for any ecclesiastical appointment. From the first moment of my being appointed Home Secretary I asked the First Lord of the Treasury, then Lord Salisbury, and since my right hon. friend<sup>2</sup> near me, to submit to the Queen the names for the appointment to benefices in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, instead of myself.

Mr GLADSTONE—As regards the position of the right hon. gentleman, I will say two things—first of all, I would say that I am quite convinced that if he had submitted any name for the purpose he would have done it with the most perfect honour and impartiality; and, secondly, that the proceeding which he has described is most honourable to his disposition. He was in the condition of Cæsar's wife, who ought not to be suspected; but I must question the regularity, if not the legality, of the proceeding. If it be within the moral competency of the First Lord of the Treasury to hand over ecclesiastical patronage, say to the President of the Board of Trade, that would be a very extraordinary proceeding; and, therefore, of his own authority and of his own motion, the right hon. gentleman appears distinctly to have broken the usages of the Constitution. I do not think any one Minister of the Crown has, as a general rule, a title to hand over any of his duties to any of the other Ministers

<sup>2</sup> Mr W. H. Smith.

of the Crown. But there is another matter. I understand that the First Lord of the Treasury has exercised this patronage, and has recommended to the Crown, and that the Crown has nominated to benefices in the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands in consequence of the supposed disability of the right hon. gentleman himself. I am extremely sorry to propound for the consideration of the right hon. gentleman a legal difficulty which I am afraid he may find to be rather serious.

He has handed over his ecclesiastical patronage to the First Lord of the Treasury, but the statute law of this country has been beforehand with him, and has handed it over to somebody else. I hope I am not making revelations. Is the right hon. gentleman conversant with the 17th section of the Roman Catholic Relief Act?<sup>1</sup> This section, which is, I believe, still in force, says :—

“ Provided always, and be it enacted, that when any right of presentation to any ecclesiastical benefice shall belong to any office in the gift or appointment of his Majesty, his heirs, or successors, and such office shall be held by a person professing the Roman Catholic religion, the right of presentation shall devolve upon and be exercised by the Archbishop of Canterbury.”

Mr MATTHEWS—I am much obliged to the right hon. gentleman for having reminded me of that section, but it was perfectly present to my mind. This ecclesiastical patronage, such as it is, does not belong to the Home Secretary but to the Queen, and the intervention of the Home Secretary is merely to suggest candidates for her approval.

Mr GLADSTONE—The business of recommending for ecclesiastical appointments does not belong to the Prime Minister either. There is no law and no binding authority attaching any of those functions to the office of Prime Minister. It seems to me most inconvenient to assert that patronage does not belong to the office of the Home Secretary, when he by fixed constitutional usage recommends for the appointments, and when he and he only is responsible for those recommendations. I do not see that it is in the power of the Home Secretary to transfer

his duties to the Prime Minister; and if it is not in his power so to transfer them, then I fear that presentations made by the Prime Minister in this case are void and without effect.

I admit that the disabling point of patronage, when it is held by a particular person in office, is not the same thing as a civil disability. I think such a disability of patronage ought undoubtedly to be general if it is to exist at all. It ought not to be a disability inflicted on the professors of a particular religion; but for those who read our history there is no doubt that, with respect to the Roman Catholic religion, the principle followed was this—not that the Roman Catholic religion was specially to be condemned, not that it was designated as a religion more remote from the prevailing religion of the country than many other forms of religion, but that it was a rival religion and a rival Church, and that, having been a rival religion and a rival Church, there might be a motive in the case of the Roman Catholics which might operate to render it unsatisfactory for them to exercise the duties of ecclesiastical patronage. In consequence, we adopt the method which is pointed out by the statute of 1829, and by the facts of our history, and we propose to sever from the Lord Chancellor the exercise of ecclesiastical patronage.

What right have we to inflict religious disability? I will not speak merely of policy. Nothing can be clearer to me than that, in point of policy, it is a gross and monstrous error. What right have you to do it? Your principle is, no civil disabilities on account of religious opinions. What right, with respect to the civil duties of the Lord Chancellor, have you to inflict this disability? I read a statement that were this disability removed from the Viceroy he would not allow so much as what is called a "removable" magistrate to exist in Ireland unless he was a Roman Catholic, and that everybody in office would be Roman Catholic; but that is not an objection to my Bill. It is an objection to the declared principle of the law, which makes the whole of her Majesty's subjects alike qualified and entitled to the possession of office for the discharge of every kind of civil duty; and here I come to the odious part of this proscription, which

is the selection of a particular body of Christians, and that the largest of all bodies of Christians, to inflict upon it this stigma and disgrace, to record in the face of the world the constitutional belief that, although the duties of the Viceroy and Lord Chancellor are, under this Bill, purely civil, and although everybody else is qualified to discharge them, one class of persons, and one only, is disabled by law from undertaking them.

The Home Secretary, I do not hesitate to say, in the possession of his office stands quite as near the Sovereign as does the Lord Chancellor, and he stands a great deal nearer than the Viceroy of Ireland; and indeed there is no act in which the Crown is concerned that the Viceroy of Ireland can perform except through the medium of the Home Secretary. Yet the right hon. gentleman, and I rejoice to say it, professing the Roman Catholic religion, holds the office of Home Secretary, and no human being has ever complained—no armful of petitions are presented against this appointment, praying her Majesty to remove him; and I believe if I were, instead of this Bill, to introduce a Bill for the removal of the Home Secretary, the very gentlemen who have appeared to-day as champions of the Protestant Constitution would vote against my Bill as dishonourable, by rejecting it summarily from the notice of this House. No, sir. Roman Catholics are ineligible for these two offices. Who, then, are eligible?

Consider what the British Empire is. Consider whom it includes. Consider all the professions of religion, and all the professions of non-religion, that make up the vast body of the community of the Queen's subjects. It might seem invidious to draw any distinction between one body of Christians and another, but pray recollect that there is no legal obstacle, so far as I can learn, going beyond the legal pale—and I rejoice that there is no legal obstacle—to the holding of the Lord Chancellor's ecclesiastical patronage by a Jew,<sup>1</sup> by a Mahomedan, by a Buddhist,

<sup>1</sup> There was here a slip of memory. The Jew can hold the office, but he, and he alone, is disabled from exercising the patronage.—NOTE BY MR GLADSTONE.

by a Hindoo. All these, under your Protestant Constitution, can hold the office of Lord Chancellor, and exercise, as the right hon. gentlemen truly says, not by the mere recommendation of the Crown, but in virtue of the legal powers of the office itself, the right of presentation to, I think, 800 benefices in the English Church. The Jews are the possessors of a great tradition in common with ourselves, and I rejoice to think that those who do not accept that tradition at all—not only the Mahommedans, but the professors of all those Oriental religions—you affirm by your law to be qualified to hold these offices and to exercise ecclesiastical patronage. Yet you deny it to the Roman Catholics. That is the inequality I ask you to proceed to remove, the inequality which you refuse to remove.

So much for the religions. What are we to say of the non-religions? Secularists, Materialists, Agnostics, Atheists—all these are not religions—but non-religions. Every professor of every one of those non-religions, every man who comes to you, saying, “I will tell you nothing of what I believe, but I will tell you a great deal of what I do not believe,” and then proceeds to sweep away from you everything that constitutes your consolation and your hope, your guide in conduct through life until death—all these people are qualified to hold the Lord Chancellorship of this country, and to recommend for ecclesiastical benefices. But the successors of Pascal, of Thomas à Kempis and of old Pope Gregory the Great, who sent missionaries to this count. — they are all to be disabled.

Oh, sir, I have shown that the principles of your law require the passing of this Bill. I have shown that your policy demands it, for what can be so absurd as that when a gentleman is engaged in the constitution of a Government in this country there is a particular man whom he finds to be, on the whole, best qualified to be Lord Chancellor or Viceroy of Ireland, but he is compelled to pass him by because he is a Roman Catholic, and to put in someone else who, whatever his merits, is less fit for that particular office?

In that noble profession, the Bar of this country, every man

rises by free and open and unbiased and glorious competition. It is a grand thing, morally as well as socially, for a man to rise and become the head of the English Bar, and is it worthy of you and your traditions, when a man has arrived at such a position, and when the prize is his by every principle of right to say to him, "Pass onwards; you are disabled from filling the Chancellorship, for you are a professor of the Roman Catholic religion"? Thus the last and only test that remains is the test of religion.

People have written to me saying, "Is it possible that you can be a Christian"—I might almost imagine that I was not from the tone of these communications—"and can you, remembering the religious responsibilities of all Christians, press this Bill?" Yes, sir, I can, I will, I do. We ought to do it because we are Christians. There is nothing more fatal to the interests of religious belief than the setting up of fictitious, unreal, spurious standards of belief. If we are to have such standards at all let them be of intelligible character. A distinguished man<sup>1</sup> and admirable member of this House was laid yesterday in his mother-earth. He was the subject of a long controversy in this House—a controversy the beginning of which we recollect and the ending of which we recollect. We remember with what zeal it was prosecuted: we remember how summarily it was dropped; we remember, also, what repairs have been done within the last few days to the distinguished man who was the immediate object of that controversy. But does anybody who hears me believe that that controversy, so prosecuted and so abandoned, was beneficial to the Christian religion? The people of this country saw through the imposture which blinded many members of this House; even it is in the name even of that religion which the vast bulk of us believe to be holy, believe to be the greatest and only true treasure of mankind—it is in that name—if I

<sup>1</sup> Mr Charles Bradlaugh. The controversy had reference to the Parliamentary Oath. The Resolution of June 22nd 1880, rejecting his claim, was ordered to be expunged from the "Journals of the House" on January 27th 1891.

must fall back upon such a resource—although it is mainly and broadly on the grounds which we are here to discuss—namely the grounds of constitutional law and political wisdom—that I ask you to give your assent to the second reading of this Bill.

# THE HOMERIC ARTEMIS.

ETON, MARCH 14, 1891.

Mr Gladstone addressed the Eton boys in the School Library ; the occasion was said to be the seventieth anniversary of his entering the School.

On February 5th 1890 he delivered an address on "The points of contact between Assyrian discovery and the Homeric text," before the Oxford Union Society.

GENTLEMEN, FRIENDS, AND FELLOW ETONIANS,—for that is the title under which I wish particularly to appeal to you to-day,— I have undertaken, perhaps rather rashly, but I hope from a good motive, to speak to you about some subjects from Homer, and the subject I have selected is that of the goddess Artemis. I took it first in the hope that it would fall within a narrow compass. But, in that respect, I have been disappointed, and I find there is more to say about her than could possibly be included within the compass of any lecture which humanity would suffer me to inflict upon you. However, I will not delay except to say that the chief part of what I have to tell you will be to present to you the facts of the case, or what in Germany they call the *Realien*—a very convenient expression to which we have nothing which exactly corresponds—but what may be called the facts of the text. I shall present to you, as well as I can, the attributes of the goddess Artemis, as she is presented to us in Homer. I think you will be surprised at their number and variety. Upon that arises a most interesting and difficult question—How is it possible to link them together by any common origin ; how is it possible to unite by a single thread so many different properties and qualities ? The first character under which she appears, and with respect to which I am not sure that full justice has always been done her, so far as regards the Homeric Artemis, is that of a type and model of beauty ;



equal in that respect, though diverse, but equal even to Aphrodite, who is sometimes supposed to be the peculiar and even sole model of beauty among the divinities in Homer. But, upon the whole, you will see that the terms which he attaches to Artemis with respect to beauty are not less striking than those of Aphrodite. But you will easily judge. There is, however, one distinction possessed by Aphrodite—namely, that when beauty is spoken of in the abstract in the great speech of Achilles in the ninth Iliad,<sup>1</sup> he refers to Aphrodite as a model—

*κούρην δ' οὐ γαμέω Ἀγαμέμνονος Ἀτρεΐδαο,  
οὐδ' εἰ χρυσείῃ Ἀφροδίτῃ κάλλος ἐρίζοι.*

That distinction she possesses. But the chief use that he makes of his models of divine beauty is to compare beautiful and remarkable women with them, and it is rather striking that the female characters whom he cares most about he compares for beauty more to Artemis than to Aphrodite. There is, I think, only one exception—Penelope, because she is, no doubt, one of his masterpieces. But although he compares her to Aphrodite for beauty, he compares her along with Artemis. It is in his characters of less importance, about whom he cares comparatively little, that he compares them in beauty with Aphrodite. There are, for example, Hermione, the daughter of Helen, whom he only mentions in a single line; Briseis, who, although an important personage, is hardly a favourite character; Cassandra, who is also little more than a lay figure, so far as the poem is concerned; and all these he compares to Aphrodite. But those whom he especially compares to Artemis for beauty—Helen and Nausicaa—are two of his masterpieces. Helen is compared to Artemis in the fourth Odyssey, where she enters in the hall of the Palace of Menelaus. So I think you will agree that I do not overstate the case when I say that Homer places Artemis upon quite as high a level as even Aphrodite. There are two distinctions between them, and they are rather interesting to observe. The first is that in the case of Artemis he includes what he does not always put forward when he refers to beauty. But he puts it forward significantly in the case of Artemis. She

<sup>1</sup> I L. 886-9.

is always represented as of considerable stature. That was in Homer one of the qualities of divinities. In the description of the shield of Achilles,<sup>1</sup> where Athene and Ares are compared as the rival gods of war, he describes them as *Καλὸν καὶ μεγάλω . . . Ἄμφις ἀριζήλω*. He has done the same thing for Artemis, and he has done it in more than one way. In a very remarkable passage to which I may refer again in the *Odyssey*, where he describes how the various divinities contributed appropriate endowments to the daughters of Pandareus, he places Artemis in clear competition with Aphrodite—in fact, he may be said to give the go-by to Aphrodite, and he fixes as the endowment which Artemis bestows that of *μηκος*, which was a distinct element of beauty in the case of deities. In the sixth *Odyssey*,<sup>2</sup> Odysseus addresses Nausicaa as like the goddess in beauty, stature, and manner—

*Ἄρτέμιδι σε ἔγωγε Διὸς κούρη μεγάλοι,  
εἶδος τε μεγεθος τε φύην τ' ἀγχιστα εἶσκω*

It is possible that he does this because Nausicaa belonged to the people who were called Phæacians, living in the island of Scheria, where they had kindred gods. It is rather remarkable that this tradition of the great stature, or the comparatively great stature, of Artemis should be so long lived that we find it even in the first *Æneid*<sup>3</sup>—"gradiensque deas supereminet omnes." But there is another point still more remarkable. It is that in Aphrodite beauty is put forward allied with passion, and gross passion, and there is not a single moral element of any kind. It is evident that Homer intended to exhibit her as wonderful in respect of her beauty, but as repulsive and not attractive. But in the case of Artemis the beauty is not only associated with the absence of vice, but with a kind of holy purity. There is an epithet, which is the highest epithet in all Homer: it is *ἀγνή*—that is, when the person spoken of is in the feminine gender—not when it is used of a man. It is even applied to Persephone, of which a word by and by. Speaking generally, it is a characteristic epithet which he applies to Artemis, to indicate a sort of holy and consecrated purity. Well, so far so good.

<sup>1</sup> Il. xviii. 518-19.<sup>2</sup> Ll. 151-152.<sup>3</sup> L. 501.

I am now going to mention one attribute of Artemis, which is of very little importance. She sends a wild boar into the Calydonian country, in consequence of a neglect of duty to offer sacrifice upon her altar. That is a purely mythological property that she possesses, I will not say enjoys, in common with the other members of the Olympian system, and I do not think it calls for any special notice on our part. The next attributes of Artemis I am going to mention are about five or six which come together, belonging to what may be called her "death ministry." How she came to have such a ministry is another question, which I will not touch upon now. It is a very remarkable function indeed. It is her office not merely to inflict death, to be the minister of death; some writers have said the death brought by Artemis is simply sudden death. But that is a mistake; it is sometimes sudden, sometimes not sudden, but the reverse, and the contradictory of painful. Painless or unconscious or placid death is one of the forms of death which it is the duty of Artemis to govern and apply. The painful death which she administers is of a different character, and that, of course, is naturally a sudden death. That was inflicted upon Laodamia in *Iliad* vi. in the legend of Bellerophon; upon Ariadne, in *Od.* xi.; upon a Phœnician woman, in the 15th *Od.*,<sup>1</sup> who had grossly misconducted herself in more than one respect. But it is quite evident that the principal ministry of Artemis in respect of death was this peculiar description of death in which death is disarmed of its sting. We find a remarkable line repeated in both poems, and applied only with a change of gender, as well to Artemis as to Apollo, in which the gentleness of this ministry of death is indicated—*οἷς ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσιν*. That is a most extraordinary and interesting function, and that this is really the character of her death ministry you may see from a striking passage in the 15th *Odyssæy*.<sup>2</sup> There is there a description of an island which cannot be absolutely identified, but the account is very likely founded upon Sicily. That island is represented as being nearly a terrestrial paradise. The people live in abundance and

<sup>1</sup> *l.* 417 and 478.<sup>2</sup> *l.* 403.

peace, and when they grow old, under the guidance of Artemis and Apollo, the men and women are brought to this painless death. There is a most beautiful case of this painless death in the 20th *Odyssey*,<sup>1</sup> in the passage spoken by Penelope in her prayer to Artemis, in which, driven to the extremity of woe and privation, which she had so long and bravely borne, she is at last led to express the wish that her life may be brought to an end—

ὣς ἐμ' αἰστώσειαν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες,  
ἢ ἐμ' εὐπλακαμος βάλοι Ἄρτεμις, ἢ φρ' Ὀδυσῆα  
ὄσσομένη καὶ γαίαν ὑπο στυγερὴν ἀφικοίμην,  
μηδ' ἐτι χείρονος ἀνδρὸς εὐφραίνομι νόημα.

lines which I will venture to translate thus—

"Would fair-haired Artemis had stayed my breath,  
So might I pass below the hated earth,  
Yearn for Odysseus even there in death  
Nor live to cheer a soul of meaner worth."

That last line I recommend to the notice of everybody—Penelope expecting her death, and regarding with horror the idea that the partnership of her heart could be claimed by any one but Odysseus. So much for the ministry of death. Then there is the ministry of song. This is a very curious point, and it has been very much overlooked; indeed, is but slightly indicated. There is no direct personal ascription of a gift of song or music to Artemis such as belonged to Apollo, but it is indicated in *Iliad* xvi. 182, when Hermes casts his longing eyes upon certain nymphs,—

... μετὰ μελπομένησιν  
Ἐν χάρφ' Ἀρτέμιδος χρυσηλακάτου κελαδεινῆς.

So song was the practice of the nymphs of Artemis, and doubtless of Artemis herself also.

Then, among the many attributes of Artemis, she was the daughter of Leto and the sister of Apollo; these two characteristics being inseparably united. As the daughter of Leto, however, her relationship to Leto is not dwelt upon by Homer so strongly as the relationship of Apollo. He is called, you will remember, in the opening of the *Iliad*, the son of Leto, as though to give prominence to the fact. But it is not so with Artemis, though the interest of Leto in her is more than once

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 79-83.

indicated. But as the sister of Apollo, there is one important point with respect to Artemis which has still to be borne in mind. Artemis is invested as fully and efficiently with what I call the "Arrow" attribute as Apollo himself. She has the bow, and she not only uses it, but a great many epithets are applied to her in connection with it. There is another point I must mention, although it is not so easy to make interesting. There are several epithets applied to Artemis in which the word χρυσός occurs, χρυσηλάκατος, χρυσόθρονος. It would appear that these, as well as the bow, must have been derived from Apollo, because there is another tradition connected with Artemis which associates her with the moon. But she could not possibly have got the element of "golden" from the moon. We are driven, therefore, to assume that this epithet is derived from Apollo. Now, I have gone through no fewer than ten characteristics of Artemis, and I have more to mention. Perhaps you will say, and justly, that I have not mentioned those which are most prominent in your minds. But what I have mentioned are all what I may call Olympian attributes—Homeric attributes of Artemis. But you cannot account for all her attributes in the ancient mythologies upon any one theory. The attributes I have gone through are, I think, all of them referable to her connection with Apollo. How Apollo came to be invested with all these attributes of song, prophecy, knowledge, command over death, is another matter. No doubt he derives a portion of the Homeric attributes from a source with which Homer does not directly deal. It comes from the fact that Apollo had been associated in other mythologies with the character of the Sun. How he came to possess these great and elevated qualities—knowledge of the future, the mastery of death, and so on—is a large question into which it would not be possible to enter now. But there is a passage which deals with this question in a high authority upon this, as, indeed, upon all subjects which he touches—in Dr Döllinger's "Heidenthum und Judenthum." That writer tells us that any attempt to unite all the attributes of Artemis under one consistent theory can only be made by the most artificial construction of the Homeric text. The poems of

Homer belong to a period when the Greek nation was only in the course of being made. In his time it was a composite nation. It was made up partly of Pelasgians, partly of Hellenes, partly of Phœnicians, and all these different factors in the composition of the nation necessarily brought with them their own religious traditions, and it was Homer's task to bring them into a sort of theological unity. The sistership of Artemis to Apollo is comparatively modern in her history. She had before this several histories and worships not in virtue of her connection with Apollo. But you may, I believe, lay down this rule, that whatever attribute Artemis holds in common with Apollo is Olympian, Homeric, Greek, and is of comparatively less antiquity although that antiquity is very great indeed. Whatever attribute she holds apart from Apollo belongs to her worship in other forms by other countries, for the most part to an earlier period.

I now, therefore, come to the attributes which do not connect themselves with Apollo, which will show in an exceedingly curious manner how traditions derived from various sources have by the genius of a great nation and a great poet been embodied in that most extraordinary religious system which I venture to call the Olympian religion. Now, you must have observed that Artemis is allied with Troy in the Iliad. Apollo is allied also with Troy, but in a different way as being the organ of the will of Zeus; there is no connection with Zeus at all in the partisanship of Artemis for Troy. Why, then, was she the ally of Troy? First of all, you will remember how in the Theomachy in the 20th and 21st books of the Iliad Artemis placed herself in antagonism with the superior power of Here. The consequence is that Here rushes at her, roughly grips both the wrists of Artemis together with her left hand and belabours her about the ears, whilst poor Artemis endeavours in vain to escape from this severe and degrading castigation; the word *ἐντροπαλιζομένη* indicates the endeavour of Artemis to escape from this castigation. It must occur to any one who tries to get at the meaning of the Homeric myth that, as has been pointed out, Homer never does anything without

a reason. When I was an Eton boy I am afraid we put many things into our lines to fill up the metre. I do not suppose that any of you ever have recourse to such a practice of less enlightened days. But in Homer there is nothing without a reason. I assure you, after much examination of the text, carried on for forty years, I am astonished at the way in which purpose is carried through—I do not say absolutely without exception, but a distinct, definite purpose is carried through the whole of these poems, and every line of them, to a greater extent, I may say, than in any other text in the world. It is only recently that the Germans have been able to keep up at all effectually with the vast mass of matter which the text of Homer indicates and involves. The great scholar Buchholz has grappled with it, and has published his account of the facts of the text which fills six thickly-printed octavo volumes. What, then, is the explanation of this degrading punishment inflicted by Here? The text of Homer shows us that the religion of Troy was greatly, if not vitally, different from the religion of Greece. The Olympian religion is founded upon what is sometimes called by the very imperfect phrase anthropomorphism. The religion of Troy was manifestly nature worship. Now, one of the pre-Homeric traditions connected with Artemis was that of an earth goddess. You know there was an earth goddess in all systems of nature worship, and as a mere unimportant figure, a sort of abstraction, Homer cannot be said not to give testimony that *Γαία* is in some sense a goddess. And a real traditional worship of that character was evidently the worship of Artemis. This partisanship of Artemis with Troy was, I take it, associated with the religion of Troy, and does not depend solely upon the Theomachy for its illustration. You will find it in the third Iliad, in which there is a very solemn arrangement between the two goddesses that they shall enter into a compact, the condition of which is that the war is to be decided by single combat, and that they shall join sacrifices and settle how it is to be arranged. If the religions had been the same there would have been no difficulty at all—they would have got over the difficulty by combining in one

common sacrifice to Zeus. Again, in the 276th line they get over the difficulty by offering a lamb to Zeus on the part of the Greeks, and a lamb on the part of the Trojans. To whom? Why, to the nature powers—to the earth and to the sun. The same idea is seen in the 17th book, when the term of Trojan success is brought to an end by Here. The sun is stated to have gone to rest unwillingly. Another illustration of the nature worship of Troy is in the 21st Iliad, where Achilles is involved in the waters of Skamandros, and is only saved by the overpowering might of Hephestus. It is quite clear that here we have reference to nature powers, and that the earth goddess as a nature power was most appropriately pitted against Here, because Here is really the Achaean form of the ancient earth goddess. Indeed, the very name *Heré* appears to be with very insignificant modifications the same as the old name *ēpa*, earth. Then we see how appropriate it is, first of all, that Hereshould be the antagonist of Artemis—that is, that the Grecian representation of the old tradition of the earth goddess in the Greek peninsula should be pitted against the earth goddess of Troy. And you will also observe that this accounts for the inexorable partizanship of Here for the Greeks, because her own attributes brought her into direct competition with Artemis. The Greek Artemis inherited the attributes of the Artemis of Asia Minor, where, as the representative of all the products of the earth, her famous statue was covered with a multitude of breasts. Her worship at Ephesus was a kind of metropolitan worship, representing the worship of all Asia Minor. I have given you some clear grounds of distinction between the Troic and Achæan religions, and of the place which Artemis holds in the Troic system. But why does not *Γαῖα* appear in the Homeric poems as a goddess? The reason is that, if she had, the link would have been broken with the Olympian system. Homer had two things to combine. He had to combine the separate religious traditions into a literary unity, and to avoid breaking with the usages of the people among whom he lived. So he allows *Γαῖα* to appear as a sort of abstract idea. It is quite evident that Artemis takes the place which *Γαῖα* would other-



wise have filled. That partizanship with Troy refers, in my view, to the character which Artemis had borne in the old mythology as the earth goddess. It may be worth while to notice that temples of Artemis abounded in Greece, most of all in Arcadia. There were between twenty and thirty of them in the time of Pausanias, who gives the most interesting and important testimony with regard to the religion of Greece. Why in Arcadia, as these were temples based upon the old tradition of the earth goddess? Because Arcadia was the great centre of Pelasgian, pre-Achæan population, and there we find represented these ancient traditions, which had to be so greatly modified in order to bring them into harmony with the anthropomorphism of the Olympian system. Another statement may at first appear paradoxical. Artemis is leader of the nymphs, who are ἐν χώρῳ Ἀρτέμιδος. Now, Homer is full of nymphs. We have all the famous nymphs brought out in Homer. We have different classes of nymphs referred to at Iliad xx. 8. It is just the same in the Odyssey. There are mountain and fountain nymphs referred to again and again. We have the term ἀγρονόμοι, which does not indicate exactly what we mean by the country, for ἀγρός has always some element of wild and open country about it. It does not imply cultivation, as "ager" and "rus" came to imply afterwards. Now, these nymphs are always found in the train of Artemis, and she is their Queen. Why? It comes of the old tradition of Artemis, because these nymphs were all impersonations of natural bodies, portions, so to speak, of the earth, springing from the earth; and it was only in that condition of human impersonation that anything belonging to the nature system under the Homeric system could be permitted to find its way into the Olympian regions, or establish a relationship with them. That makes the connection sufficiently clear for the case of the nymphs. But, besides that, I do not hesitate to say that the function of Artemis, the Huntress Queen, is referable to the same source. Recollect that Artemis is not a mere sportswoman. She is queen of the regions in which she sports. Both in the Iliad and the Odyssey she is πόντια θηρῶν, which shows the way in which Homer

deals with the earth goddess. He cannot directly make her the earth goddess, but he makes her the goddess as well of animals as of nymphs, who represent all the natural bodies, which places her in the closest connection with the attributes of the earth goddess. There is another post-Homeric tradition which makes her the queen of the under world. You will recollect the solemn invocation of Dido before she dies—

“Tergeminamque Hecaten, tris virginis ora Dianæ.”

At that time Artemis had become the goddess of the under world. She is not the goddess of the under world in Homer. But yet there is a sort of indication of connection between her and the person who was the goddess of the under world. There is a solemn and mysterious figure—for you must bear in mind that the doctrine of woman's rights had reached its highest point—Aidoneus there is nothing; everything is done by Persephone, and, curiously enough, there is this indication of a relationship between Artemis and Persephone, that he calls Persephone *ἀργυρή*—that remarkable characteristic epithet applied, as we saw, to Artemis. You will see how well being goddess of the under world agrees with the idea of Artemis having been an earth goddess in some of the old mythologies. According to Homer, the earth was really the shell of the under world, and the sun when he comes before Zeus in the *Odyssey* has to pass daily the mouth of the under world. The sun god there threatens that, unless he gets what he wants, he will stop there, and not give any more light upon the earth. Thus it is that Artemis came to possess this function of goddess of the under world. Artemis also appears as the moon goddess, as Apollo is the sun god. As nature powers, they cannot come into Olympus, into which they could only enter upon Achaian conditions, though they might retain some of their ancient attributes. There are certain attributes in this connection, such as *χρυσόθεσπος* applied to Artemis as *χρυσήνπιος* is applied to Apollo. There are other signs also of this old character of moon goddess. One is very curious, and that is the very singular manner in

which Homer deals with the moon. The sun bears the character of a god, but he is kept in the shade in the Iliad, and he is not allowed to enter Olympus. But the moon is dealt with more unceremoniously. She is not even a person, much less a god. She might just as well be made of green cheese. She is nothing but a physical body. I will now release you from this long story. But you will see, at any rate, that I am only stating what would be found in any book of credit and authority dealing with these questions of antiquity. When I was a boy I cared nothing at all about the Homeric gods. I did not enter into the subject until thirty or forty years afterwards, when, in a conversation with Dr Pusey,<sup>1</sup> who, like me, had been an Eton boy, he told me, having more sense and brains than I had, that he took the deepest interest and had the greatest curiosity about these Homeric gods. They are of the greatest interest, and you cannot really study the text of Homer without gathering fruits; and the more you study him the more you will be astonished at the multitude of lessons and the completeness of the picture which he gives you. There is a perfect encyclopædia of human character and human experience in the poems of Homer, more complete in every detail than is elsewhere furnished to us of Achaian life.

<sup>1</sup> Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford (1828-82).

# THE FINANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE IRISH PARTY, AND MR PARNELL.

HASTINGS, MARCH 17, 1891.

LORD BRASSEY, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,—If you are good enough to feel any satisfaction in meeting me on the present occasion, I can assure you, in return, that I rejoice to attend an assembly of true-hearted and right-minded men, citizens whose political principles and purposes I believe to be those that are required for the welfare of the country, and who, though at the present moment they form unhappily a minority in the local constituencies, yet are, I believe, in an attitude of advance, and are likely, as I hope, before long to assert for themselves that share in the representation of the home counties to which by character, ability, influence, and patriotism they are thoroughly entitled; and under such auspices as those of our chairman and those of Mr Gardner<sup>1</sup>—who was at one time the solitary representative, like Abdiel in Milton, among seventy members of Parliament, of Liberal principles, of men like Mr Allard, the secretary of the institution,<sup>2</sup> and last, but not least, like Mr Harcourt,<sup>3</sup> by whom the arrangements of to-day have been organised—I feel that you will emulate the example—indeed, you have in more than one district already emulated the example—set by other portions of the country, and will give to Liberal principles that power, when the opportunity is offered—that power and influence that they deserve in the councils of the nation. I must dwell upon local affairs if it is only to say one word of sympathy

<sup>1</sup> Member for the Saffron Walden Division of Essex.

<sup>2</sup> The Home Counties Division of the National Liberal Federation.

<sup>3</sup> The Honorary Secretary.

with the calamitous losses of life that have marked the recent severe weather, and from which this coast, and this spot upon the coast, have not been exempt. It is impossible for any one who bears the name of Briton not to have a very strong and deep interest in the gallant portion of the community who brave the winds and waves for our advantage, and many of whom I have seen in the streets of Hastings and St Leonards to-day welcome us on this present occasion.

Now, the present situation is peculiar. There is a good deal which I think ought to be said upon the situation of the moment, and therefore I would beg you to understand, without an undue consumption of time and your patience, it is not in my power to attempt to map out in full the aspects both of the present and the future. I cannot lay down all the whole basis of the Liberal creed or of its prospective developments. I must make a selection from the urgent and interesting topics that appear to me to call for present and particular attention. I shall not go round the interests of the country as represented in the different departments of the Government. Indeed I will only bestow one word and one moment upon a most important department of public affairs, which must always be of deep interest in every assembly of Englishmen; I mean the foreign affairs of the country, and I refer to that because I can do it with greater satisfaction than any comments which it might be my duty to make on other departments of public interest. I admit that we are imperfectly acquainted with the transactions of the Foreign Office during the present Administration. We know, however, that Lord Salisbury has had in his hand more than one knotty and perplexing question, some of them not connected with former times, some of them inherited from former times. Fuller information might modify my opinions, but I am bound to say speaking generally, that, so far as I know, there has been little in the proceedings of Lord Salisbury in connection with the Foreign Office to which as Liberals we ought to object. When we look back to the state of things twelve or fourteen years ago, to what we call familiarly but truly the Jingo period, I can

very thankful that we are enabled to hold a pacific attitude, and to wish Lord Salisbury well in the application of all sound and pacific principles to the maintenance of English interests and English honour in the conduct of his great department as Foreign Minister.

I turn now and look to another department of the State, at all times the most important, with regard to which I particularly wish that it were in my power to hold language of as amicable a character. I refer now to the finance of the country. Unquestionably the finance has reached a condition in which it has become requisite that the public mind should be addressed to the consideration of the principles that are gradually being sapped, and of the undermining, dilapidating processes that are being applied slowly and tacitly to the soundest principles of our financial system. On one great occasion it was my privilege in Parliament to encourage, and as far as I could to aid, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the important measure<sup>1</sup> by which he effected a large reduction in the interest of the National Debt—a reduction that may, I fear, have borne hard upon many of those who were public creditors, but with regard to whom we are bound to say that what they did they did with their eyes open, and no compulsion was offered to them. No one had a right to complain of the measures adopted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of the steps taken with regard to that measure, which has been of public benefit. But what has since been going on? I must remind you of that which is apt to pass away from recollection, for the finance of the country is intimately associated with the liberties of the country. It is a powerful leverage by which English liberty has been gradually acquired. Running back into the depths of antiquities for many centuries, it lies at the root of English liberty, and if the House of Commons can by any possibility lose the power of the control of the grants of public money, depend upon it your very liberty will be worth very little in comparison. That power can never be wrenched out of your hands. That powerful leverage has been what is commonly known as the power of the

<sup>1</sup> Mr Goschen's Conversion Scheme, 1838.

purse—the control of the House of Commons over public expenditure—which not only is your main guarantee for purity, and which has been, certainly, in other times a very effective guarantee for economy, but which likewise lies at the root of English liberty, and if the House of Commons could by any possibility lose the power of controlling the granting of public money for carrying on the affairs of the Government, depend upon it your other liberties would be worth but very little in comparison. No violence, no tyranny, whether of experiments or of such methods as are likely to be made in this country, could ever for a moment have a chance of prevailing against the energies of that great assembly. No; if these powers of the House of Commons come to be encroached upon, it will be by tacit and insidious methods, and, therefore, I say that public attention should be called to this.

I will tell you on what main conditions, in my opinion, it depends. First of all, it depends on the right of the House of Commons to fix the expenditure of the country from year to year, and you will at once perceive that that is the only security you have for the observance of fair conditions between one year and another. If it be in the power of the Government, through the agency of the majority, to cast the burden of the present upon the future, the temptations so to do will inevitably prove too strong for the weakness of human nature. The consequences will be the gaining of a partial and a superficial credit and popularity which are not deserved; in the second place, the storing up of future financial embarrassment; and, in the third place, a real invasion of those public liberties which are so essentially associated with the power and privilege of the House of Commons. Next to that power of annual control which is necessary and essential, is that there should be a unity in the public funds. For 150 years—from the time of Mr Pelham and Mr Pitt, the greatest finance ministers of this country, so far as capacity was concerned—the object has been to get rid of the older system, in which a multitude of different funds were created, and to bring them into one account, to bring them into due conspicuousness and

due purview of the entire nation, so that we might see them as a whole, and might know what we were about; and these long-continued labours, I must say, have had wonderful results, and I do not hesitate to say that for practical purposes there was nothing in the civilized world to compare with the efficiency of Parliamentary control such as it has been during the greater part of my public life, and such as it will continue, unless you, by acquiescence in an abuse, allow it to be undermined. With this unity of system and simplicity of account, which has been built up by the skill of Ministers in the past to such a high degree of perfection, there is another condition which is even more important than those I have mentioned, and that is that there should be no concealment, and that everything which has been spent should be brought before the country from time to time. Then you put the saddle upon the right horse. There was extravagance because the people did not feel interest enough in the matter to stop it. I can only tell you for my own part that, such is the importance I attach to the question of absolute publicity in the whole of the public expenditure, that I consider—though I am not a man to recommend waste at any time—the waste of five millions a much smaller evil than the concealment of one million. When there is waste, it remains to the nation to correct it. When there is concealment, they are without redress.

What have we seen in the course of the last year or two? Proceedings that I must say, in my opinion, are unexampled. I shall not be able—the matter has become so complex through the arrangements of the present Government, and the present majority have adopted it, that it would take almost hours to lay before you a full exposition of the state of the facts. What I have to say will contain only a part of them, and I will endeavour to state to you some of those which may be considered the most striking and vital points of the case. I state—and you will agree with me—that the fixing of the expenditure from year to year by the vote of the House of Commons is the essential basis of our system. What has been done now? By an Act<sup>1</sup> passed in the year 1889 ten millions of money were set

<sup>1</sup> The Naval Defences Bill.



apart for expenditure, with no condition as to the time within which the money should be spent, but with the provision, made under Act of Parliament, that the liquidation of this expenditure was only to be made in seven instalments, spread over seven years. See what that would mean. It means the taking out of the hands of the Parliament of the future the power of determining what the public charge of these years is to be. And what is the pretext for this? It is that they want merely to build ships of war. No doubt they did, but if it was money to build ships of war the House of Commons were the proper judges in that matter. And see the points that are here involved. It is said, and said most truly, by Sir Thomas Farrar that at the present moment there is nothing in which fashion more prevails, and in which fancy more prevails, than in the character and exact structure and condition of ships of war. We have been changing incessantly for the last thirty years or more, and Sir Thomas Farrar has said wittily and well that there is almost as much fashion in ships of war as in ladies' bonnets. And what do you think, gentlemen, or perhaps I had better alter my phrase—what would you think, ladies, of the good sense and prudence of any lady who went to her milliner and, upon a plan now laid down and determined, gave an order for a bill, and bound herself to pay for a 'seven years' supply of bonnets all rigidly adapted to the present pattern? I have no doubt, in delicate language—more delicate language than I can pretend to use—you would point out to such individual the institutions in this country intended for the charitable reception, kindly treatment, and, if possible, the cure of those who are providentially visited with certain afflictions, and that it is quite evident, to judge from her actions, that was the residence she had better, for the present select. But it is more than that as the matter now stands. In voting the estimates year after year, the House of Commons is able to discharge that function which belongs to it by the Constitution, of itself, and to no other part of the Legislature. The House of Commons is the body that has the right to extend if it thinks fit, or contract if it thinks fit, the expenditure of the country. It is now provided that for seven years

to come fourteen hundred odd thousand pounds in each year shall be applicable to shipbuilding under Act of Parliament. The discretion is taken out of the hands of the House of Commons. Oh, we shall be told, but the Act of Parliament may be altered. It may be altered, but by whose consent? By the consent of the House of Lords. And if, though the House of Commons—I do not say it would; that is not the question; the question is who is competent and who is entitled to judge—and if the House of Commons should be of opinion during these seven years, bound as it is to represent the national interest and feeling, that this expenditure ought to be contracted, it cannot diminish it by a single farthing without the sound Tory majority that rules the House of Lords, and I think that is a pretty serious state of affairs.

But that is not quite all. As I said, were I to go further into detail I should show you that the floodgates of abuse have been opened even to a much larger extent than I have yet described. But I can only select my points, and I am bound to say that my next point is this, that when this enormous expenditure was devised it was so arranged under the terms of the Act of Parliament that it should be concealed from the public, that it should not appear in the annual returns of expenditure. Our friend Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, an enlightened member of Parliament,<sup>1</sup> devised a form of return which should detect this misdoing of Her Majesty's Government, and under which the whole expenditure for naval and military purposes in the year 1891—the whole estimated expenditure—should be fairly set before the country. It is to him, and not to the Government, that we owe the knowledge of the fact that about thirty-eight millions were spent upon our army and navy in the last year, with regard to which, though this is a very wealthy country, it is a matter, it seems to me, which deserves consideration more than it receives, greater even than in some periods when great wars have forced it upon the attention of the country. That was not all. I come now to the most vital question, the whole question of publicity, because when we examine the

<sup>1</sup> For Bradford.

returns we find that the sum of 38 millions was to be spent within a year only, and 33½ millions were to be provided for by taxation and 4½ millions were the concealed contraction of public debt, and this was not to be known to the people at all. Mr. Lefevre dragged it into the light of Parliamentary control—control of the House of Commons, that is, as regards publicity.

I think that is enough, but I have another point to mention scarcely less important. We are getting into a system under which Parliament is treated and the country is treated to the exhibition of fictitious surpluses of revenue over expenditure. It is not possible to consider anything more unjustifiable or anything more dangerous. What is a surplus? A surplus is an excess of *bona-fide* receipts over *bona-fide* expenditure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer last year showed a surplus of 3½ millions, but what did he do with the expenditure? If he had shown that 4½ millions of expenditure of which I have just been speaking to you he would have had no surplus at all, but a deficiency of one million. But this surplus was laid before the House of Commons, and was treated as a free fund which the House of Commons was at liberty to dispose of in relief of the public burdens, while all the time the public burdens in the shape of debt were being increased by about a million. Well, gentlemen, that is a very serious state of affairs, and here again you seem to appreciate the little simile of the ladies and the bonnets. I ask you what would become of the landowner, what would become of the tradesman or lawyer, or any other man who has an account to keep and has got to find food and raiment for himself, his wife, and children, if, when he casts up his accounts at the end of the year, he deliberately strikes out a large sum, a charge he knew he had incurred, and pretended to himself and to others that he had a balance or revenue over expenditure, that he was in a flourishing condition, and might then proceed to indulge in some more little luxuries in addition.

But, gentlemen, I must add one word upon that subject, only one word, because I want you to see what was done or attempted to be done last year by the Government, not by the House of

Commons, for I am glad to say that the House of Commons stopped it—even this House of Commons stopped it—but the manner in which it was proposed to dispose of that fictitious, artificial, and pretended surplus of revenue over expenditure. A large portion of it—I think about one third; if I remember right, £1,200,000—it was proposed to invest in the fancy scheme of buying up the licences of public houses on such terms as owners of public houses might be prepared to accept! That is what I called—and I venture to say it was the right and just description—a Public House Endowment Bill. If the same thing were done with grocers and haberdashers, and the Treasury of the country was to be expended in buying in grocery and tailoring establishments at terms fixed by themselves, it would be just the same—a Grocers', a Tailors', or a Haberdashers' Endowment Bill. So that money, which was artificially and, I might say, except that I do not want to be personal, or I would say fraudulently obtained—which was obtained without any due warrant or title—was to be laid out in the very worst, most foolish, and pestilent method that could be devised. Well, gentlemen, it is fair to say the House of Commons stopped that, and I rejoice that it stopped that plan, for it would have done enormous mischief. And I am convinced that my friend Sir William Harcourt did not exaggerate when he said that if that Bill were passed and its principles adopted the public houses of the country could not be bought up—and according to the principle of the Bill, there was no mode of stopping them but by buying them—could not be bought up for a sum less than two hundred millions of money. Well, gentlemen, it is a great thing that that mischief has been averted. That is one among the many blessed boons that you owe to a patriotic Government devoted to the sacred and solemn task of maintaining a parchment union between England and Ireland.

There are many other things connected with finance to which I should like to refer, but I must not do it, because I have more to say, and I must be mindful of the fact that there are bounds to all excesses, even in public speaking. I must go to that other subject, which has assumed within the last four months

a peculiar position—the great subject of Ireland and Irish policy. There is nothing more remarkable than the history of the Irish Parliamentary party as it will stand in the pages of the future historian. The Irish Parliamentary party now existing in the House of Commons has been the result of a long series of circumstances. First of all it represents the substitution of Parliamentary methods for those methods of excess, crime, and outrage which at one time appeared to be the only methods with the least hope of efficiency to the unhappy people of Ireland. Now, the establishment of Parliamentary methods and the inculcation and familiarising of Ireland with the doctrine that Parliament was to be the organ through which redress was to be obtained of Irish grievances was an enormous advantage in the political civilisation of that country; and I am bound to say—for it is beyond all question—that the attainment of that advantage was due almost entirely to one man—namely, that eminent and, I think, undoubted patriot, Daniel O'Connell. In later times there has been a further development of those principles which has been of a very remarkable character. It has been thought by the Irish National party that the peculiar circumstances of Ireland justify and require the adoption of other rules beyond the rules of substituting Parliamentary action for irregular and illegal action, and two things have been done, two practices have been adopted, which I think it requires the very peculiar circumstances of Ireland to justify, which are probably justified, and which have been justified by those circumstances. In the first place it came to be the rule of the Irish Parliamentary party that their votes should be governed, not upon the Irish questions alone that are submitted from the chair, but upon all questions brought to the issue in Parliament—their votes should be governed by Irish considerations. That may sound strange, but I would illustrate it in this way. Supposing one of you had been a member of Parliament in the time when Lord Grey's Reform Bill was a great and absorbing question of the day, and was a question to which it was obviously right—such was the concentration and absorption of public interests in the subject—that everything

else should be made to yield, it would not have been at all unreasonable to determine in your own minds that you would go on voting for him until that Reform Bill was settled; you would give every vote upon every question with reference to its tendency to impede or promote that particular measure. That is just what the Irish did. They said—"For us the Irish question is supreme; the Irish question is Alpha and Omega. Without it for us as Irishmen there is no good to be obtained; with it all other good will follow." So they adopted that principle. Then they adopted a further principle, which was this—that whenever a Nationalist entered Parliament to become a member of the Nationalist party in Parliament, he adopted it subject to a pledge, I believe, of honour—I know not whether written, but certainly understood and avowed and perfectly well known—well known to those connected with Parliamentary matters—that upon every question that might arise and might be made the subject of deliberation by the Irish party the minority should give way to the majority, and co-operate with them to the sacrifice of their own opinions. This is a very remarkable fact with respect to what is now going on in Ireland. I believe this cannot be contradicted, and that what I have said is the literal and simple truth, that every member of the party in the minority should sacrifice his own opinions to those of the majority. Now this is the means by which the Irish party arrived at a position of great power and influence, which it appears to me that, at any rate, of late years they have been using for the good of their own country and for the good of the Empire at large. As far as regards the latter stages of the development of the Parliamentary party principle to which I have referred, and particularly as regards the rule that an individual must yield his opinion, after a fair opportunity of stating it, to the majority, and must regard the view of the majority as law for him, I have always understood that, in particular, that latest principle was due very much to the skilful and discerning agency of Mr Parnell when he was leader of the Irish party.

And here I must say one word upon Mr Parnell, not of a

personal character—I have no intention of putting myself in personal conflict with any man. Whenever I see ascribed to him—I do not say “said by him,” that is another matter—whenever I see anything ascribed to him, anything concerning myself, which I know to be untrue, then I think it my duty to say so to the public. I was reading in *The Times* yesterday what purported to be a portion of a speech made by Mr Parnell the day before—that is, last Sunday; and it was to this effect. I will not read the exact words, but I will give the substance. He said a charge had been made against him that he had opposed the claims of labour candidates—you know what are meant—and brought about their defeat. He admitted that this was true; but what was the cause of it? These are the words ascribed to him—“He did so because, as an ally of the Liberal leaders, acting in negotiation with them, he was bound in England to carry out their policy; and when they asked him to use his influence and direct his organisation to defeat labour candidates he was under an obligation to do so.” Well, as Mr Parnell is stated to have said by the reporter of *The Times* that that instruction he received from the Liberal leaders, and that it was imposed upon him as an obligation by them, I suppose when he speaks of the Liberal leaders I must be more or less included. On that supposition I wish, with very great brevity, to state to you that in the recital I have made, which is rather cruelly ascribed by the reporter to Mr Parnell, there is not one syllable of truth, so far as I am concerned, from beginning to end. If the Liberal leaders have taken any part, and they have taken a part, with regard to labour candidates, it has been the desire from the bottom of their hearts to promote, by the use of every legitimate means at their command, an increase, aye, an undeniable increase, in the number of the representatives of labour who now sit in the House of Commons. And I trust I may have an opportunity of backing what is said by reference to the candidature of a labour candidate<sup>1</sup> on this platform, and expressing, in the face of you all, my hearty and warmest wishes for his success.

<sup>1</sup> Mr G. Ball, candidate for the Rye Division of Sussex.

I pass on from that particular point ; I pass on from that point to what lies beyond, and I look to the remarkable career of Mr Parnell, with respect to which it has often been thought I owed some explanation to the public. It has been pointed out that, in the month of October 1881, I myself, in the City of London, denounced Mr Parnell in terms of great severity, whereas for several years past I have been in political co-operation with him in respect to the Irish question. It is true I denounced him in the month of October 1881. I argue the question whether it was wrong. I stick to my own conviction, and I tell you on what I founded myself. I founded myself on this—that Mr Parnell had at that time, on more occasions than one, but especially, I think, in a speech delivered in America, expressed himself in language which I thought most dangerous to the Empire—with respect to the total separation of Ireland from this country. That was one ground ; and the second ground was this—that at that time, according to my views of the proceedings of Mr Parnell, he was a determined opponent of the Irish Land Act, and had arrived at the conclusion that that great measure, to which we, the Liberal Government, looked as the main instrument at that time for redressing the grievances of Ireland—he was determined to bring that measure to ignominious failure. Those were the grounds of my denunciation. After Mr Parnell came back to the House of Commons from his imprisonment in Kilmainham, I never heard of his repeating that dangerous language with regard to the separation of Ireland from England, and I am bound to say—only justice to him requires me to say—that instead of being an opponent of the Land Act he did then become a co-operator with us in giving it effect. And looking at the position he assumed from 1881 to the end of the Liberal Government of 1885, gentlemen, I have no selfish or personal interest in commending it. Mr Parnell, during those years, and his whole party were in opposition to us, and it was their vote that put us out of office in 1885. I do not complain of that, but in speaking of the Irish Parliamentary party, I think that in their position it might be quite possible that they were justified in doing what they



thought was demanded by Irish interests. I make no complaint, and never have, directly or indirectly. We come down to 1885, and then came 1886, with the announcement of the policy of Home Rule. When that policy was announced by the Government of 1886, it was frankly and magnanimously and patriotically adopted by the Irish National party. Our plan was based upon the twin ideas, first of all, of handing over to Ireland the full and efficacious control of her own local affairs: secondly, of maintaining in a form not less full and efficacious the control of the Imperial Parliament over all those charges and all those interests which were Imperial. With a most enlightened sagacity the Irish party of that day adopted that basis of action. They reserved to themselves the right to amend in this or that detail the plan we had announced, as we on our side were both entitled and bound to adopt any improvement of that plan. That was the basis of our co-operation. Well, what I wish to tell you is this—that if it happens in my lifetime—I must not say what is to happen after my political career has reached its close—but if it happens in my lifetime that every fresh plan for Home Rule, as I trust may be the case, may be founded with a rigid fidelity upon those two bases—neither of which, in my opinion, can be justifiably separated from the other—any infringement of the one would, if I am right in my view, inflict mortal damage on the other. That is the basis on which we stood. Upon that basis we worked from the summer of 1886 to the winter of 1890, and with what result? You know with what result—that upon certain chances which bye-elections afforded we obtained last year sixteen seats. With that before me I think I may venture to call it a matter of certainty that, if under those circumstances Parliament were dissolved to-morrow, a large and commanding majority would be returned for the purpose of converting Ireland into a blessing and source of strength to this country, instead of being a difficulty, an embarrassment, and an obstacle to the practical conduct of our affairs, to the application and pursuance of our vital interests. Well, gentlemen, then came that sad and painful

time of the disclosures in the Divorce Court;<sup>1</sup> and I must now speak with respect to the effect of those disclosures, because there you, in point of fact, are more deeply concerned than I am. It was not my business, gentlemen, to place myself upon the chair of the Judge, to pronounce judgment upon my fellow-creature with regard to any amount of delinquency, real or imaginary, great or small, of which he had been guilty; but it was your part, gentlemen, as the Liberal party of this country, to consider on what principles and on what rules you would be guided in the disposal of your votes. The Liberal party of this country knew perfectly well that the according of Irish Home Rule depended upon them. In some recent speech of Mr Parnell's I see he says that it may be time for them to think of Tory allies, and that Lord Salisbury may be very likely included. They have played that game once. It did not seem to lead to any very satisfactory results. I have never made any secret of it; if it were possible that the Tories would give Ireland a measure of Home Rule corresponding to the measure I have alluded to, I should be delighted. I should give them the same support as if it were a measure proceeding from the Liberal party. But there is no impediment in the way of such a measure in the Tory conscience which does not care much about it. I do not know whether it is in the Tory intellect: I do not think it is in that either. It is in the existence of the unhappy, unfortunate, ill-starred abortion of a party which is called the party of Liberal Unionists. The Tories might give Home Rule just as they gave Roman Catholic emancipation. They had always opposed it; but, nevertheless, the time came when they thought proper to give in, and they were not extinguished by giving it. On the contrary, the Tory party lives by its defeat. It always comes up again like the figures in "Punch" if you think it has been fairly and finally disposed of by a great clout on the head. But the Liberal Unionists are in a different position, because the reason and ground of their existence is opposition to Home Rule, and if Home Rule were granted they vanish into thin air. That is the difficulty, gentlemen. Well, the

<sup>1</sup>The case was that of O'Shea v. O'Shea and Parnell, tried November 1890.

Liberal party arrived at an important conclusion. I have no right, of course, to speak as an infallible authority, but I believe I am stating what is perfectly well known. We never entered into the affairs of the Divorce Court, or considered whether Mr Parnell should resign his seat in Parliament. That was a question for the Cork constituency. No question of this kind was ever raised, even as to the ordinary leadership of the party. What the Liberals of this country did was this. They looked forward to a coming crisis. They said, "We are working for a majority in the next Parliament; that majority, obtained by Liberal agency in this country, will give Home Rule to Ireland." That Home Rule to Ireland, if there had been no disclosures in the Divorce Court, would have been the means of making Mr Parnell the constitutional ruler of Ireland. The disclosures in the Divorce Court, we must observe, were of a complex and not of a single character, and embraced a great deal besides the immediate matter brought to issue. The battle comes to issue, and we have to decide whether we still, after these disclosures will place the constitutional leadership of Ireland in the hands of Mr Parnell. We will not do it. Now, gentlemen, that is not an immoderate thing to say. I had not to consider in what condition as a party they would give their votes and devote their efforts. My duty was a much simpler one. I was merely the reporter of the general conviction of the Liberal party. Now, I never doubted that that was the conviction of the Liberal party, and of the soundest and best parts of the party, and, moreover, I believe that if that was their conviction in December last it is now their conviction. It is a final fact in the case. We are ready, gentlemen, to face defeat, exclusion, political misfortune; but to do that which I have described—to create constitutional leadership in Ireland under guidance such as I have referred to—the Liberal party are not prepared, and no consideration will induce them to be prepared.

Well, what happened next? As I told you, according to our understanding, we expected the Irish party would have met together, and would have voted as to who was to be their leader. I should have thought if there was one thing more absolutely in the

nature of a party than another, it was the choice of a leader. A political party not authorised to choose its leader is a contradiction in terms. However, gentlemen, a dispute has arisen; a different view is taken by the minority of the party, while the majority of the party has steadily and finally decided that Mr Parnell shall not be leader of the Irish party. The question has undergone that transportation across the channel which, in the case of criminal prosecutions, is called a change of venue. The venue has been moved away from England to Ireland, and it is the Irish people who have now to judge of that question—a question of great importance, on which they appear to be in a certain degree divided. But what we say is, that a seceding minority, bound as we understand by its pledges to follow the majority, is resisting that majority, and setting up the man whom the majority has put down. Another curious circumstance, gentlemen, I cannot help noticing in passing. I read a manifesto of Mr Parnell's, published in America. He appeared to me to have put in that manifesto many questionable claims, and to have reckoned upon some sources of strength which, perhaps, he does not possess; but one thing I was exceedingly struck with in the way of omission. He apparently forgot to inform the Irish in America whom he was addressing that he had now the support of the Tory Press and most of the Tories in England. Undoubtedly he ought to have set forth that amongst his resources when he was taking an inventory. But there is a minority of the Tory party, who are very indignant at that mode of tampering with Mr Parnell, and of endeavouring to set him up, which is practised by too many of them.

Now, the question as it comes to us, I think, stands thus. The decision of that question we had to leave to the Irish people, not because we have no opinion about it, but because we think it is a question for them to decide and not for us, and that our interference would give a handle to those who may wish to mislead them, and that the less, therefore, that we intervene in the discussion of it the better. All I hope is, that the decision may be a prompt decision and a clear decision, because I can conceive nothing more injurious to the Irish cause or to the

Imperial interests connected with it, than the continuance of a state of things which would give even to the most prejudiced persons the slightest excuse to say it was not quite clear as to the way in which the voice of Ireland was to be given. The question for us is, What is our duty? And it is on that I am very anxious, if you will allow me, to say a few words. An idea has gone abroad that the action of the Liberal party must undergo some immediate change in consequence of what has happened in Ireland. Now, let me say that I think that idea has found but a very limited acceptance indeed within the limits of the Liberal party itself. Our opponents like to say: "Oh, the ground is cut away from under your feet now; you can make nothing of it." That is not the sentiment of the Liberal party. And the action of the Liberal party and the election at Hartlepool<sup>1</sup> show that the Liberal party never was more solid, never more possessed, or more determined as a united host upon prosecuting and achieving that which it has in view. The idea, I do not say it is a dishonest idea, is formed entirely on a mistake. It seems to be supposed that the Liberal party within the walls of the House of Commons has been busy all this time since 1886 in endeavouring to persuade the House of Commons to adopt Home Rule. It is nothing of the kind. We have not preached the doctrine of Home Rule directly or perseveringly in the House of Commons, and why, gentlemen? I do not think that even a political party or anybody else, if he could avoid it, would waste his breath thus. You might just as well go and preach to the waves which wash upon your cliffs, or upon the coast of Brighton, you might just as well go and preach to them as preach to the majority in the present House of Commons. We have kept our breath for other purposes. It does not follow that we have been idle in the House of Commons. No; we have steadily resisted in the House of Commons any attempt to coerce Ireland in all its forms. And now what with regard to coercion? Depend upon it the difficulty is not to be got rid of by such an idea, even if it were sound, instead of being exactly

<sup>1</sup> January 21st, 1891. Mr Gladstone's supporters won the seat from their opponents.

the reverse. It is not to be got rid of by the notion that Home Rule can be thrust into a corner, which it cannot. It has not been, and it is not, our immediate daily duty in this House of Commons. Our daily duty has been to resist Irish coercion and to mitigate and qualify it where we could not resist it. And in certain cases we have not been wholly unsuccessful. For example, you may remember that early in this Parliament, when numbers of Irish members and priests were sent to prison—you will remember the mode in which they were treated. There they were put on the plank bed. They were made to clean out slops from their own cells. They were made to wear the prison garb. They were made to take their exercise in company with common criminals, and that proceeding was actually defended by our opponents. If we are rightly informed, this has now altogether failed, and yet Mr Dillon and Mr O'Brien<sup>1</sup> have been sent to prison, and I am sorry for it. But, as I believe, as far as their treatment is concerned they have nothing to complain of. So that, as a minority, we have not to say that our labours have been wholly ineffective. I want to show you the truth and reality of the proposition we make—that Irishmen are by the present law, and still more by the present administration of the law, deprived of the privileges which Englishmen enjoy. I will not go now to the question of combination, because it leads into long disputes.

I will refer to the right of public meeting, and I will tell you what happens in Ireland with regard to the right of public meeting. You will then judge whether I am justified in what I say when I make the allegation that Great Britain is governed upon one principle and Ireland upon another; that our Irish fellow-subjects are shut out from liberties which we enjoy and know to be essential to our civil condition. Now I will tell you some of the practices that prevailed in Ireland. Suppose a public meeting is called and the Government consider that that meeting ought to be put down. No doubt in the discharge of its duty the Government may put down the public meeting subject to correction by Courts of law. Why, they may put down that

<sup>1</sup> February 1891.

public meeting by force, subject to correction by the judgment of a Court of law. If we were here met together and suspected of something objectionable, no force could be applied to us, for we are in England, not in Ireland. In Ireland the police is under the direction of the present Irish Government. Of course, the blame does not lie with them, but with their chiefs at headquarters. Irish meetings are charged and dispersed by force without any notice given, if the Government holds them to be illegal or impolitic and means to break them up. That is one point in which it is absolutely impossible that Irish administration should be attempted, or, if it were attempted, would be tolerated in England. Another point is that meetings are violently dispersed, and after the people who composed the meeting fly in all directions they are pursued by the police and batoned after they had fled from the meeting as if they had committed a criminal offence. Can you conceive such an incident in England? You know it is just as impossible as that Jack Ketch should be sent round first to one man's house and then to another. Another point is this, which was stated by Mr. Dillon in the House of Commons. He said he formed one of a group in a town where a public meeting was going on. He formed one of a group of five or six gentlemen standing talking in the street far away from the meeting, and having no connection with it; and a police officer gave the order to a body of police to charge them and disperse them by force. This is totally destructive to the first elements of liberty.

Then I will refer to the visit of Mr Morley to Ireland, where one of these police matters was in question and certain Irishmen had been taken up by the police. Mr Morley found three things, I think. First of all, that he himself was cheered by the crowd; secondly, that the police were hooted by the crowd; and, thirdly, that, I believe, six prisoners were cheered by the crowd. I do not think that it is a very good or healthy state of things when the police engage in such practices as to lead the people to hoot them. But this is treated as a criminal offence. With regard to these three points, you will ask me for my authority. I will

give it to you. My authority is this. The three points were stated most distinctly by Mr Dillon in the House of Commons in the summer of 1890, and the Government were asked whether they disapproved or approved of such practices. No answer could be obtained. Now, if the Government had said these were the errors of subordinate agents, that might have been accepted; but no answer could be obtained. I followed Mr Dillon in the debate, and, having recited the three points, I again challenged the Government. But no disavowal of those practices could be obtained. They have been noticed again and again this year with a similar result. Therefore I am justified in saying these are practices approved of by the Executive Government. And I cannot expect that the police should apply principles of justice and liberty which their masters encourage them to disregard. I mention these points because you will see that this is an indictment of a very clear and distinct character. I will name two other points. A meeting was held last year, I believe at a place called Swinford, where a member of Parliament was to address his own constituents, which was supposed to be lawful and constitutional, and even very often necessary. What happened? A police officer made his appearance, and gave notice to the meeting that if anything was said which the police officer deemed to be illegal he would disperse the meeting by force. Can you Englishmen conceive an occurrence of that kind in England? You know it is absolutely impossible for a Court of Justice to condemn a meeting, and the Executive Government on its responsibility to disperse a meeting, because a dangerous speech is anticipated. I believe I have made out my point that the liberties of Ireland are trodden under foot by the present Government. And we have a great and sacred work to do in defending the present liberties of the Irish people, let alone the laws to which they are pledged. We must endeavour to secure for them what laws they suppose more tolerable than those under which, unfortunately, they have now to suffer.

Well, I shall soon to be able to release you altogether. I have been endeavouring to point out to you that it is a mistake to sup-



pose our occupation has in any degree altered or been interfered with. We have the duties relegated to us of defending the interests of Ireland, and of promoting the public interests of Great Britain, and I wish to point out that we have not been altogether idle in the execution of that duty since Parliament resumed in the latter end of January. Before Christmas the whole time of the House was in the hands of the Government. But there have been few days for the discussion of subjects brought forward by private members since we met at the end of January, and we are now in the middle of March. Here are several things which have been done. There was, you remember, the deplorable course of prosecutions, founded upon principles of the grossest intolerance, against the late Mr Bradlaugh. That stigma has been removed, and the whole matter of these proceedings erased from the journals of the House of Commons as unworthy of its proceedings. We have endeavoured to raise the question of a thorough reform of the present very defective system of registration through the agency of my right hon. friend<sup>1</sup> whom I am glad to see here, and to establish the principle that plural voting is not according to the principles of the British Constitution. We claim one man one vote as the dictate of justice and of sound policy. We have endeavoured to rectify a gross inequality, very much aggravated by Her Majesty's present Government, in the preference given to land and realty in the matter of taxation. We have endeavoured to obtain that which your neighbours in London, if not yourself, deeply feel—a new state of law with regard to the taxation of ground-rents. We have endeavoured to efface from the Statute-book the two remaining enactments which violate the principle that no one should be subjected to civil disabilities on account of his religious opinions. Those provisions are almost entirely extinct, but one or two miserable relics still exist. The whole of the Tory party in the House of Commons goes down to the House to hug, and embrace, and applaud, and appreciate them as if they were the precious bulwarks of the Constitution. We have endeavoured to assert what we think

<sup>1</sup> Mr J. Stansfeld, M.P.

justice requires with regard to the Church Establishment in Wales. Finally, we have endeavoured to amend the law of conspiracy in a manner which, had we been able to carry it out, would have removed the greater part of the grievances which Ireland suffers under the Agrarian Act. Well, I hope you will be inclined to think that it is not a contemptible record of proceedings taken within the last six or seven weeks of the whole time to which my present register refers. I think you will also agree with me, it shows we have plenty to do. The Liberal party has still a great work before it, a great and noble work, the continuance of that work which has made it so valuable to the country in former times, a continuance of that same spirit which has inscribed upon the Statute-book of the country so many reforms and improvements as, perhaps, have never been accumulated in the peaceful records of any country. Sustained and supported by you, and by those who think with you all over the country, we shall continue to the very best of our ability to prosecute that great and patriotic enterprise, because we know that it is in that not violent, but steady, not rash, but at the same time courageous, following of our principles that we are able to pursue the way to the union of classes, to the domination of the law, to promote the stability of the Throne, and to advance the happiness and the contentment and the prosperity of every portion of the people and the strength of this great Empire.

# THE COLONIAL EPISCOPATE.

ST. JAMES'S HALL, JUNE 19, 1891.

The Jubilee of the Colonial Bishops' Fund was celebrated by a meeting in St James's Hall; the Bishop of London presided.

MY LORD BISHOP, MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,—In obedience to the call which has been made upon me from the chair, I rise to move and to ask you to assent to the following resolution:—

“That the remarkable success with which it has pleased Almighty God to bless the efforts, begun fifty years ago and continued to the present time, for the extension of the Episcopate in the colonies of the Empire, and the missions of the Anglican Church throughout the world, is a call and encouragement to all members of that Church to secure its further expansion upon the primitive principles of Apostolical order and discipline.”

I am very sorry, my Lord, that the absence of the First Lord of the Treasury and the leader of the House of Commons, which I am quite certain is due not to anything less than a very substantial cause, should have given me prominence upon the present occasion beyond what I had anticipated. You, my Lord, in your address, and the Primate<sup>1</sup> in his letter, have already placed before the world, or at any rate, before the meeting, the speciality, such as it is, which warrants my presenting myself to you on this occasion. I am possibly the only one of all those here present, though that is uncertain, who was also present at the important meeting held in the month of April, 1841. I am certainly the only man—I will not say the only man living

<sup>1</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury was unable to be present, owing to illness.

but the only person living and also available for this purpose—who took part in the proceedings of that memorable occasion. I cannot pretend to appear before you, ladies and gentlemen, as entitled to any special credit for a marked devotion of time or of means to the promotion of this great undertaking. I cannot claim for many years to have borne more than a formal part in the business of the Colonial Bishoprics Fund. I appear before you as a historical landmark. A historical landmark may possibly have its uses on such an occasion, because progress has to be measured by time, and the time of fifty years which has elapsed since the meeting held under the auspices of Archbishop Howley and Bishop Blomfield has been a time very pregnant with events of the deepest interest, some of them calamitous, others happy and blessed in their results to the Church of England and to the general cause of religion, than any half-century to which we can point in the recent history of Christendom.

My Lord Bishop, it is evidently not an exaggeration to say that this is a remarkable occasion. Take the argument supplied by this single fact; avoid all enhancement, all elucidation, and rely singly upon the figures that the Bishoprics, which were ten in 1841, now in June, 1891, number eighty-two. My Lord Bishop, reverting to that period, I cannot but draw this distinction between the present undertaking and the generality of pious, benevolent, and wise designs. When such designs are conceived in the mind of man they are usually introduced to the world with an amount of sanguine expectation—and not unjustly introduced to the world with an amount of sanguine expectation—which the hard conditions of life and the lessons of subsequent experience tend materially to abate. Such, my Lord Bishop, is not the case in the instance now before us. I will venture to say that if the most sanguine man among those who attended the meeting of April, 1841, had been asked to carry his glance forward fifty years into futurity, and to form his estimate of what might on reasonable grounds be then hoped to be achieved, there would not have been one among those persons there present who would have ventured to base his calculations upon any result even nearly, even remotely, approach-

ing that which by the blessing of Almighty God has been actually attained. And, my Lord Bishop, I for one—I hope I do not exaggerate—am not sure that even that multiplication eightfold of the number of Episcopal sees gives us a fully proportionate idea of the extension and enlargement of the Church.

The statistics of the Episcopate are simple and accessible; even those of the principal clergy are to a certain extent within reach; but those of the communicants and adherents of the Church are, of course, almost entirely inaccessible to us. I must confess that I do not altogether reject the belief that if, as we are enabled to exhibit this eightfold multiplication in the number of Episcopal sees, we could show with equal fairness and facility a multiplication in the number of clergy labouring in the field, of the assistants of those clergy who come forth from the ranks of the laity, and finally, of the members of the Church itself, probably the general result would even show that the eightfold multiplication is not beyond but is within the lines of the vast material extension which has been attained. But, my Lord Bishop, great as that material extension has been which is measureable by figures, there have been other results of this great movement, perhaps more remarkable still. You have referred, and I think it is among the most signal of all the features of this case—you have referred to the unquestionable fact that this institution has appealed less to the ordinary means of obtaining popularity and public support than perhaps any other useful and valuable institution of the day. We have not marched in the streets, we have not assembled in anniversaries, we have not availed ourselves of the habitual and powerful assistance of the Press. There seems to have been a general absence of resort to those perfectly intelligible, perfectly rational, and very powerful and successful instrumentalities; but without excitement, without noise, with a sparing recourse—for it has been a sparing recourse—to the Church and to the world only upon those occasions when evident and palpable necessity has arisen, we see the results before us to have been not less remarkable, in my judgment, than those which can be shown in the case of any undertaking which has distinguished the history

of the present century. It is like that beautiful account of the building of the Temple,

“ Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.”<sup>1</sup>

It has arisen from the ground. You have it now before you in noble, in magnificent proportions. And if it be true there have been these long intervals of silence on the part of the council and governors of the fund, remember that that negative statement has likewise the force of a positive appeal, because if you have not been troubled, not been pestered, as some would say with incessant demands for the promotion of this great cause, be assured when the demand is made it indicates a real interest and has real necessity. Give it a friendly welcome, and meet the claim it is entitled to make upon you.

It is not possible not to see the powerful, constant reaction of this great undertaking upon the Church at home. The Church at home, if not in the person of its members, yet unquestionably in the person of its clergy and of its governors, has experienced within these fifty years an immense elevation. No small part of that elevation is due to the heroic enthusiasm which attended the first efforts at the foundation of the Colonial Episcopate. It would be impossible, my lord, to do justice to the members of that body. Selection from among them is dangerous. We are guided now partly by personal recollections. Accident may cause us to omit those who ought to be included in the list; but names such as Bishop Selwyn, Bishop Patteson, Bishop M'Kenzie, Bishop Armstrong, and Bishop Field—these are names than which none brighter are to be found in the annals of the Church of England or of the Church of Christ at large. These, my lord, are happy and they are ennobling recollections, and, in truth, this great effort has taught us, I think, many lessons, one of which—if I may be permitted to do so without treading upon forbidden ground—I will endeavour to illustrate, and that is the vast resources that are unfolded in the principles of voluntary action within the Christian Church. I do not here raise the question of the establishment. That question may have been raised with regard to the Colonial Church

<sup>1</sup> Heber's Palestine.

fifty years ago. Now it hardly exists, and, furthermore, it hardly exists for any man at home or abroad who is reckoning upon the prospective extension of the Church, and the resources upon which it will have to draw. No one looks to the action of the State for the enlargement of means for the maintenance and propagation of religion in future times. To retain that which exists is probably all that the most sanguine anticipate, and from point to point questions may arise in different portions of the world, as they have arisen in the colonies, even upon that retention. In truth, if we look to the aid of the State, these fifty years of which I speak have been years of great loss, for there was a far larger amount of subvention from political and civil sources fifty years ago for the purposes of the Colonial Church than now. But in those days the effect of that political subvention, I really believe it is no great paradox to say, was to starve the work of the Church. They were blind to the vast fund upon which they had to draw in the wealth of Christian faith and Christian love. They had no idea at that time that, at any rate by the Church of England, very large resources could be made available from voluntary sources, and, if you will allow me, I will illustrate that statement by one single and slight anecdote, which I think is conclusive.

At that time the principal resources of the society—the venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in the Colonial Possessions—were derived from a Parliamentary grant of £16,000 a year applicable for and used—very properly used—for the maintenance of the clergy and the Church in the North American colonies. When the movement of reform came on, with circumstances of some excitement, in the years 1830 and 1831, there was a feeling growing up highly unfavourable to the continuance of this system of providing by tax or by the annual vote of the House of Commons for the religious wants of a particular denomination in the colonies; and by a rather rude measure of the Colonial Office, which was afterwards a good deal softened, it was determined, and the society were informed, this sum of £16,000 a year would be diminished, the first year to £12,000, the second to £8,000, the third to £4,000, and the fourth year to nothing.

at all. That was undoubtedly a sharp transition, and it caused the dignitaries of the Church to bethink themselves what could be done. I think in the beginning of the year 1832 or 1833 I dined in company with an excellent man—one of the most learned and most able men—the Bishop of Chichester will sustain me in what I say—one of the most learned and able divines of the Church known at that time in Oxford, Dr Burton, who was then Professor of Divinity. Dr Jacobson<sup>1</sup> at this private party was speaking of this withdrawal of the £16,000. It made a great impression upon me at that time, and I have retained the language which was used. He said—"Well, you know, if this were a moderate sum, something might be done by personal contribution; but such a sum as £16,000, how would it be possible to do so? It would be beyond rational expectation. The case is desperate." What would be thought of £16,000 a year now as a limit to the subvention and the demands of this venerable society? She had at that time some other resources; but this was very decidedly the most important of them all. Now, what would be thought of that limit now? No, my lord, you will see that there is no want of means in the world. What the world wants is replenishment of the stores of faith and love, and industry and intelligence and capacity, which belong to mankind, and which belong in so special a degree to our own race. Wherever there is good to be done over the broad surface of the earth, there will be abundant means forthcoming in order to do it. The lesson is of active extent and practical character, and can hardly be adequately described, which we have learnt upon that subject. Our minds have been opened and enlarged. We have seen that we were at that period to a certain extent in Egyptian bondage. Instead of going to an office in Downing Street and endeavouring to arrange matters at the table of a Minister, you have now to deal with the Christian mind and Christian heart at large. You can go to mankind as a race, to the nation as a nation, to the Church as a Church. You stand upon broader ground—you wield more powerful instruments, and if only you do not fail in

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Bishop of Chester.



the faith and courage necessary to use them, depend upon it you will achieve great results.

There is one other lesson which I cannot help referring to, though I will not dwell upon it at length, and which the Colonial Church has taught us. Whatever be the merits and whatever the peculiarities of the system of an Established Church, there cannot be the smallest doubt at least of this, that the localities have been so multiplied and so complicated in an old country and old institutions like ours that it becomes extremely difficult to provide for a new state of things. Now, at that time, in 1841, there had hardly grown up the very first perceptions of the great necessity which was coming upon us, that is to say, the necessity which comes upon a church as a voluntary society when it finds itself, and finds itself perhaps rather suddenly, deprived of all the supports, be they natural or artificial, be they beneficial or otherwise—but of all the supports which in other circumstances it has derived from the connection with the State. It was not very long after the establishment of this fund when there came the first emergence of an apparent necessity for self-government and of self-constituted powers in the churches of the colonies. I myself, if I may presume to say so, was rather early in the field in making an effort in the year 1852, aided by the legal and friendly assistance of that admirable man, Lord Hatherley,<sup>1</sup> in devising a measure,<sup>2</sup> which did not at that time, however, obtain the assent of Parliament, with a view of putting the churches in the colonies into a condition of capacity for exercising powers of self-government. I am not going to dwell upon the details of what has happened in the last fifty years. But it is known to us all that some of those colonial churches have had to confront difficulties—I will not say due to what cause—they were due, I think, to a variety of causes—but they had to confront difficulties, the amount of which cannot be exaggerated, while they were travelling over the path, rough enough in itself, which leads from a condition of legal establishment to a condition of

<sup>1</sup> Then Sir William Page Wood, Lord Chancellor 1868-1872.

<sup>2</sup> The Colonial Church Bill.

voluntary action. The case of the Church in South Africa, as it is in connection with the name of Bishop Colenso, and all which that name suggests,<sup>1</sup> is one which of itself reads to us a hundred lessons. Now, no one can doubt that that case—I am not going into the rights or wrongs of it, I am not going to dispute or argue upon this view of the matter or that, but there cannot be a question as to the general result—that that case has operated in the most powerful manner,—first, in giving a practical character to the self-government and free existence of a Church in the colonies; and, secondly, in dispelling the dangerous and mischievous idea which undoubtedly weighs upon the minds of many in this country, and which had taught people, or induced them, falsely to believe that when you take away the legal sanction from spiritual things, then spiritual things lose all their force and vitality.

The exact reverse of that proposition, I apprehend, is true. It is rather singular—I have availed myself to some extent of the means which have been put into our hands—it is, I say, rather singular to perceive to what an extraordinary length in certain cases the superstitions of the old legal system of this country have carried, not only weak or indifferent, but even learned and able men. I hold in my hand a remarkable treatise by the late Lord Blachford,<sup>2</sup> called “Some Account of the Legal Development of the Colonial Episcopate.” In that tract Lord Blachford finds a state of things in which the South African Synod had declared—having lost every vestige of the privileges and advantages of establishment—that it would claim the privileges and freedom to which it had been declared to be judicially entitled, and it said it would not recognise as a binding authority in questions of faith and doctrine or discipline relating to faith and doctrine any decisions other than those of its own ecclesiastical tribunals, or such other tribunals as might be accepted by the provincial synod itself as a tribunal of appeal. Now, here is a legal deliverance of the most formal character which I venture to commend to your notice as in

<sup>1</sup> From 1864 onwards.

<sup>2</sup> Better known as Sir Frederick Rogers, a distinguished official of the Colonial Office; raised to the Peerage in 1871.

itself an historical, a legal, and a philosophical curiosity. I am proceeding on the authority of Lord Blachford, and I do not think there can be a higher one. Lord Blachford says—"The Judicial Committee in the case of 'Merryman v. Williams' treated this practical refutation of their ecclesiastical authority as an abandonment of the English standards of faith and doctrine." And the words are—"There is not" (that means as between the Colonial Church and the Church of England) "there is not the identity in standards of faith and doctrine which appears to their lordships necessary to establish the connection required by the trusts in which the Church of England is settled." It is certainly, to me, a most astounding statement. I can perfectly understand this—you may say the members of an Established Church are bound, and all who are in communion with them for the purposes of the Established Church are bound, to give obedience to the law of the land. They can take their choice, if the law of the land decrees what is contrary to their consciences; but the law of the land is entitled to be obeyed. But I do not understand him to say, "That is a doctrine of law and order," but to say that is part of the standard of faith and doctrine, so that in point of fact we who accept the Apostles' Creed, we who accept the Nicene Creed, are not merely accepting that doctrine, but are to be bound to any construction a Civil Court may put upon any part, and that if we do not accept it we are not only bad citizens—that might be argued, I can understand it, though it is a difficult point—but we are departing from the standard of faith and doctrine. So that in point of fact the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are very imperfect, and there ought to be added to each of them a separate article to say that all men, to be good Christians, must be bound, at any rate in the Church of England, to accept whatever senses may be affixed to either of these creeds by the civil tribunals of the country. I wish to use this subject simply to say what a debt we owe to the Colonial Church for having carried us through these controversies. That citation which I have made I do not make as having at the present moment the smallest practical importance. The worms

and moths have nearly eaten it to pieces. There is not a document of the dark ages which is more completely dead and gone for all practical purposes. But I wish to point out how near you have been to a very serious and dangerous case. Of all interventions into the domain of conscience, the intervention of the State, never dreamed of, happily, in this country, and I hope never to be dreamed of, if it did come to a reality, would be the most dangerous and destructive. Now I have kept you too long.

I come back to the meeting of April 1841. I stated that I was the only person then living and then honoured by being engaged in the proceedings of that meeting who is now available for the purpose of recommending the prosecution of our present object. But, my Lord, there was a remarkable speech made on that day which sent a thrill of exaltation through the whole assembly in Willis's Rooms, delivered by a man of eminence, of known devotion to his work in his own sense, whose whole mind and whose whole heart were then given to the service of the Church of England. He was then known as Archdeacon Manning. Archdeacon Manning, in a most striking and most powerful speech, delineated the condition of the English Church of the Anglo-Saxon race of our colonial Empire. He pointed out upon how vast, how gigantic a scale we were then occupying the waste places of the earth, and multiplying millions of human beings who trod the face of it, and then he pointed to the scanty evidence which up to that time had been given of any care which had been given by the Church of England for the propagation of the Gospel in those vast countries. He contrasted the meagreness and feebleness of our spiritual efforts with the wonderful, undying, untiring energies of the commercial powers, and the spirit of emigration, which were even then achieving such vast results in the world. He contrasted, I say, the one spectacle with the other. He said the Church of England has now to make her choice between the temporal and the spiritual. She has to determine whether she will be the beast of burden or whether she will be the evangelist of the world. That was a noble appeal, a noble challenge. The force of it was felt. It was taken up and duly

answered. It was answered then, and I trust it will again be answered now. If there were grounds for answering it then, when everything was in hope and expectation of a rational estimate of the future, much more are there grounds for enlisting in the same service now, when we have before us results which we are compelled to admit not only to be satisfactory, but even to be in their scale and in their nature wonderful. My Lord, I trust, therefore, that these efforts which you and your brethren in the episcopate are making in the country will receive an attention in some degree in proportion to their value, to the weight which they derive from your authority, but the still greater weight which they derive from the nature of the topics which they involve. It is inspiring, but it is tremendous; it is from one point of view a terrifying spectacle to consider the multiplication of mankind throughout the various quarters of the world. We cannot but say at the very least that in order to enable us to cope with the vast process and to obtain in full satisfactory results, the Gospel of which we are professors must attend and accompany the development of temporal and material civilisation. To answer to that call is the purpose, at least in its measure, of the meeting to-day. We have arrived at a time when I think every claim that can be conceived is found to exist on behalf of the fund for which we now appeal to you. The results are before you. The principles involved are the same as they have ever been, but the promised field which was white with the harvest is larger than it ever was. It calls upon each of us, upon those in authority and upon those not in authority, to do our best according to his measure and degree, to the young to offer to that cause the most precious of all offerings—their time, their heart, and their life; even to the old it leaves the duty of bearing testimony to that which they have seen with their eyes and heard with their ears—to the results of which they are endeavouring to speak, not as a matter of speculation, but as a fact which gives them a firm and ever deepening conviction that the Church of England has a great and manifest part to play in giving effect to the beneficent dispensation of God in the Gospel for the salvation of the world.

# THE FUTURE POLICY OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

NEWCASTLE, OCTOBER 2, 1891.

The Annual Meeting of the National Liberal Federation was held at Newcastle.

MR. PRESIDENT,<sup>1</sup> LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Relying on your kindness to favour as much as you can, by your indulgence, the exercise of physical powers which are not altogether what they have been, I proceed to address you; and I cannot otherwise commence than by saying that it is impossible to listen to speeches toned so highly in the sense of favour and generosity as those of your President and Mr. Burt<sup>2</sup> without misgiving. But I must not allow misgiving, however just, to suppress or to impede the expression of gratitude; and I am truly and profoundly grateful, both for the temper and the spirit which led them so far beyond the bounds of strict justice in what they were pleased to say, and in the reception you have been so good as to give to their too favourable remarks. Now, I meet you here in part as citizens of Newcastle, that great and distinguished community, but also more particularly to-night as representatives of the Liberal sentiment throughout the country, which we believe to dominate powerfully and effectually the mind of the country at large.

We have fought, ladies and gentlemen—we have indeed fought a long and severe contest. When we look back to the year 1886, we look back upon an epoch of great and crushing defeat; but every one of the five years which has elapsed since the period of the defeat has brought upon our horizon a brighter and again a brighter light. We began with the pro-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Spence Watson.

<sup>2</sup> Member for Morpeth.

spect only of a possible recovery. Next, recovery shortly became probable. It has, according to our best deliberate judgment, now been, humanly speaking, raised to such a point that it is the precursor and it is the assurance of the time, which we know cannot be distant, of a certain victory.

Our duties as they become more hopeful become also more serious. We have to take a more practical view of the particulars of affairs, and were I able to perform it, my duty would be to attempt, this night, aided by your favour, something like a survey of the public situation. But the first difficulty that encounters me, ladies and gentlemen, is this—a surfeit of matter, for there is no other word adequate to describe it. It is not the excess merely, it is the absolute surfeit of work that remains to be done—work that accumulates from year to year; and of work that is certain to fall more heavily into arrear in proportion to the prolongation of the rule of a Tory Government. Yes, gentlemen, it is a surfeit which makes it difficult now to choose the topics of address, and which will make it difficult hereafter, when the time has arrived, to choose proper subjects of immediate and preferential attention. Whatever your victory may be, with all your intelligence and all your zeal, you will want the additional virtue of patience; for such are the demands of this vast Empire, extended and diversified beyond all precedent in human history, that without that patience, disappointment and even confusion might be the results of triumph.

Now, I will endeavour to run over with the utmost rapidity several subjects with regard to which I own their claim to public attention, without attempting to give them, on the present occasion, anything deserving the name of satisfaction.

For instance, if I name to you the question of shortening the duration of Parliaments it is to dispose of it in a sentence; to say that it manifestly demands, and ever will demand, the earliest opportunity that can justly and wisely be chosen for the purpose.

If I speak of the readjustment of taxation, particularly as between various kinds of property, I speak of a subject

abounding in complex detail, but which I may also dismiss with the utmost brevity, because I can confidently refer you to the speeches and votes which on all occasions we have given in Parliament as an assurance that when its turn comes it will have practical and decisive attention. I name next a word that it requires some courage to utter in these days—the word economy. It is like an echo from the distant period of my early life. The wealth of the country, and the vast comparative diffusion of comfort, has, I am afraid, put public economy, at least in its more rigid and severe forms, sadly out of countenance. However, I will say this one word in acquittal of my own conscience. Much has been said, and fairly and justly said, of the advantageous change effected by the present Government and Parliament in the conversion<sup>1</sup> of the National Debt, which has resulted and will further result in a large annual saving. But all that saving has already been absorbed, and effaced, as I may say, from the public account, by the enormous increase not only of the charges in supplying the necessary civil wants of the country, but by the enormous increase of our naval and military expenditure. Now, that increase, vast as it is, is as far as possible from satisfying the relentless appetite of those who have laboured most heartily to bring it about; and now and again, and even within the last few days, there have been in some portions of the public Press, and apparently with high authority, complaints of the miserable insufficiency of our military and defensive establishments.

Well, there is another subject on which I should have been glad to speak had time permitted, for foreign policy has many and important domestic results; but I will only say this, that, as we Liberals in Parliament understand it, the foreign policy of the present Administration has been well-nigh the inverse and the reverse to that of the Administration of Lord Beaconsfield. We endeavoured to make the work of the Beaconsfield Administration difficult, because we thought it was doing ill. But we have striven to make the work of the present Administration in its foreign policy easy, because we think, as far as



our information has gone—and we have been so tranquil on the whole subject that our information, I admit, is but partial—that so far as we could discern, its spirit had undergone a beneficial change, that appeals to passion and to pride are no longer sent broadcast over the country, and that on the contrary a more just, more genial, and more kindly spirit is exhibited by the departmental portion of the activity of Lord Salisbury. Accordingly, we have endeavoured to make his work not difficult but easy. One thing only I would wish to say upon this subject, and it is this.

I shall indeed rejoice if—before the day comes for the present Administration to give up the ghost—it be possible for Lord Salisbury to make an effort to relieve us from our burdensome and embarrassing occupation of Egypt. That occupation, so long as it lasts, rely upon it, must be a cause of weakness and a source of embarrassment. It is one which we owe entirely to engagements contracted by the former Tory Government, and the escape from which I greatly fear the present Tory Government, improved as it is in its foreign policy, will, notwithstanding, hand over to its successors to deal with. There is much, very much more, necessary to be said in order to give a full view of this subject; but I must at present content myself with this succinct and partial reference.

When I think of the multitude of subjects that I am running over and have to run over, I recollect the device of the Father of all Poets, as he is constantly and justly called, who, when he found the matter crowding upon him inconveniently, appealed to the Muses and besought them that they would give him, instead of the single organ he possessed—that they would give him ten mouths and ten tongues with which to speak. Were I in a condition to bring such a machinery into play I could treat with tolerable satisfaction of the matters that are before me. As it is, you will recognise the incompetency of human nature, and you will liberally pardon my shortcomings in proportion.

There is a subject that I must next give a word to. It is the subject of temperance. You are so much agreed in regard

to it that it does not require detailed discussion. But I have a word to speak both of congratulation and of hope. I congratulate you, gentlemen, on the ground that has been made. Although the proceedings of 1890 were negative and not affirmative—although they appeared to consist substantially only in the rejection of a bad plan<sup>1</sup> and not in the adoption of a good one—yet they had this silent but most important effect, that they disposed—I really believe for all time—of by far the largest and most alarming part of the question of compensation. And here I must say that my right hon. friend Sir William Harcourt made, by his fearless and energetic expositions, a valuable contribution to that result. The proceedings of 1890, I say, disposed of the possibly monstrous and certainly enormous claims for compensation which must have been made, and which the present Government then acknowledged might have been made, in the extinction of licences. With regard to those claims, I do not hesitate to say that, viewing the foundation of the Bill then introduced, it would have been possible, under the provisions of that Bill, to build up a wall in conformity with that foundation which would have proved an impenetrable and inexpugnable fortification when the time came to any effectual dealing with the drink traffic. There have been, however, some positive results also. In various parts of the country it appears that a new life, a more equitable and a bolder spirit, has been infused into the proceedings of the boards of magistrates, I mean the licensing boards. But I wish also to speak a word of hope. I trust that most of you who are here present—I should be glad to say all of you, except that I fear there may be some who are approaching the period of life to which I have myself attained—that most of you may witness a thorough and effective reform of the laws connected with the traffic in alcoholic liquors. I trust that among the conditions of that improvement you may find a fair and just acknowledgment of the rights of local populations to deal in a proper manner with the question whether there shall

<sup>1</sup> Embodied in the Local Taxation Bill, 1890. See an earlier speech in this volume.

or shall not be within their borders any acknowledgment of public-house traffic at all. I do now enter upon the particular form and conditions of such a plan ; but I affirm that the right of the populations rests upon a basis as sound and solid at least as the right that is now possessed and is now exercised without objection to determine that important question by the owners of the soil.

Well, gentlemen, relying on the firmness of your nerves, I venture next to mention to you for a similar brief and insufficient notice the two questions of the Scotch and Welsh, or it may be Welsh and Scotch Disestablishment. I am careful to avoid all attempts to determine any question of precedence as between the two. It is no affair of mine. I am a resident in Wales, and I am a Scotch representative. I will not embroil myself in what would be for me an empty and fruitless controversy. But I will assure both Scotland and Wales that they have the unanimous support of the Liberal party. It does not depend upon those specially responsible for the conduct of Liberal affairs in Parliament which of these shall take precedence. Each of them has bold, resolute, and active champions who will not consent to wait, and who would be very wrong if they did consent to wait, and to suspend all their personal action until Home Rule has become law and until, in the new order and suggesting of the Liberal programme, their turn has come. One further consolation I venture to offer to both the Scotch and the Welsh : If the Scotch gain the precedence their gain will help onward the Welsh cause, and if the Welsh gain the precedence their gain will help the Scotch.

I have another question to pass lightly over, though it is a very wide question and a very difficult question. It is the question of the House of Lords. It is a large and difficult subject. Considering the pressure of the claims of various other subjects, it may be thought that the question of the House of Lords is for the present in the shade. I should not be very sorry if it remained in the shade for some time longer, provided that the additional lease thus gained were gained by its wisdom, forbearance, and moderation in dealing with the public affairs.

of the country. Though the question of the House of Lords be at this moment remote, there is one mode by which it might be made approximate, very near indeed, and a burning question of the day, and, that is, if in an evil hour the House of Lords were tempted to listen for one moment to the counsel that was so inauspiciously addressed to them but a short time ago by the Prime Minister of the country. Lord Salisbury, in a speech<sup>1</sup> some two or three months back, contemplated the possibility—his mind is open to that extent—of a Liberal victory at the general election. He contemplated the passing of a Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons, but he assured his friends that all would not then be over, for they might still rely upon—I am quoting the sacred words—upon “the play of the other parts of the Constitution.” Strip off the disguise from these words. There is but one other part of the Constitution that could possibly perform such a prank as to interpose itself between the deliberate judgment of the nation and the incorporation of that judgment in the form of law, and that is the House of Lords. The House of Lords tried that game in 1831, and threw out the Reform Bill. The consequence was, that it had to undergo a most painful humiliation as the price at which it obtained a delay, and no more than a delay, of twelve months in the passing of that measure; and the conduct then pursued destroyed much of whatever confidence was still at that period entertained by the country in its action. Again, gentlemen, I myself, humble as I am, had once the infelicity, or felicity, as you choose to call it, of finding myself in a sort of conflict with the House of Lords. We had a great battle in 1860 and 1861 upon the repeal of the paper duty. It was one of the most difficult and one of the most important incidents in the whole of the Free Trade controversy. You know what some of the consequences have been in the establishment of that Free Press which has done more than any other single cause for the education of the public mind. Without that Free Press it is hard to say whether the vast extension of the

<sup>1</sup> At the Mansion House, July 29th, 1891. The words as reported in *The Times* are, “the play of various portions of our Constitution.”

franchise effected by the Bill of 1884-1885 might not have produced results much more mixed in quality than those we have actually witnessed. By, and since, the first Reform Act, the electorate has been multiplied tenfold, and the extension has, in my deliberate judgment, unquestionably raised the tone and spirit of the proceedings of the House of Commons. I hope, nay, more, I believe, that the House of Lords will not accept the deplorable suggestion tendered to them by the Prime Minister. I believe that they will decline to let their position in the Constitution be used for so ruinous a purpose. But this I know well, that if they should be reduced to a policy so unfortunate, they themselves will be the first to repent of it. They will raise up a question which will take precedence of every other question, because upon that alone would depend whether this country was or was not a self-governing country, or whether, on the contrary, there was a power, not upon the throne or behind the throne, but between the throne and the people, that would stop altogether the action of a constitutional machine, now, as we trust, if not perfected, yet brought nearer to perfection, by the labour, the struggles, the patriotism, and the wisdom of many generations.

The question, the important question, is how are we to decide upon the title to precedence among the many subjects that are before us. In connection with precedence, one name that would leap to the lips of any man addressing you is the name of Ireland. As to the title of Ireland to the precedence, there is no question at all about it—it is a matter fixed and settled and determined long ago, upon reasons which, in my opinion—and what is much more, in the opinion of the people—cannot be refuted, cannot even be contested.

There is another question which I think the Liberal party, with much reason, are disposed to place in a very forward rank, and that is the question of registration. The question of registration is one that diverges, severs itself into two branches—one of them the amendment of registration, properly so called, the necessity for which is urgent; and the other, the establishment of the principle of 'one man one vote.' It is,

impossible at this moment to lay down positive rules, but it seems to me that there is much to be said in favour of this disposition to give to Parliamentary registration a very forward place among the objects of Liberal movements, and the reason is this: It is not merely an improvement in your legislation, it is an improvement in the instrument by which you legislate. It makes Parliament fitter for its work, and even if a little time—I hope not much—but if a little time were to be lost upon carrying good Bills for the improvement of registration, you might say that the time was well disposed of, on the same principle, or that principle upon which a man spends a little time in sharpening or in stropping his razor before he shaves himself.

But I go to a more complex subject—a subject which includes and involves many subjects, but which undoubtedly has forced itself into a position among the very foremost, and which can best be presented to you at this time of day by the use of the single word—labour. We have performed on behalf of labour, that operation which is the most essential of all, by the enfranchisement which, in 1885, added three millions to the constituencies of this country. But there is much remaining to be done. One of the things essential to be done is, the rectification and reform of what is termed the lodger franchise, a franchise which, constituted as it now is, works entirely in favour of the wealthy lodger, and has provisions most unfavourable to the labouring man who is a lodger too. And to such an extent does this evil prevail in the metropolis—I see one of its members here, I think, to-night—to such an extent does this evil prevail in the metropolis, in consequence of the utter insufficiency of the law for the enfranchisement of lodgers, that the metropolis is represented in a proportion highly unsatisfactory as between its population and its voting list, as compared with the other portions of the country. That is the first item I have to mention in the matter of labour. And the second item I should put down as necessary to be considered is labour representation, as to which I think you will all heartily agree. There ought to be a great effort of the Liberal

party to extend the labour representation in Parliament. That representation, so far as it has gone, has been thoroughly and entirely satisfactory. It has done immense good. I can hardly say that it wants or that it admits of an addition of moral force, but an addition of numerical force to that representation is not only desirable, but in the highest degree urgent. I tell you frankly that, in my opinion, nothing proves more distinctly the soundness of the heart and mind of the people of England, than the good choice they have made of their labour representatives. That being so, I say, let us give scope and room enough to choose a few more men, who, I doubt not, will be of the same kind. I say a few—I hope they will not be a very few, but a good many, and I believe that that sentiment is a sentiment that the whole Liberal party entertains. I am quite sure that as far as regards those who at headquarters, if I may use the phrase, are charged with the central management of the concerns of the party, they will not lag behind, but will exhibit the utmost disposition, whenever a constituency is favourable to the claims of a labour candidate, to forward the accomplishment of their desire. But I proceed. If we are to have more labour members, more labour candidates and members, there are certain consequences which follow from the adoption of these just principles.

For instance, one consequence that follows from it—a consequence that might very well be defended upon its own grounds, but which is very much strengthened by the introduction of a large number of labour candidates—is that which has long been a favourite idea with the Liberal party, namely—that the necessary expenses of election should not be drawn from the pockets of the candidates, but from the public funds. It is a public work, and the cost of it justly appertains to the public to discharge. But that is not the only consequence of the same kind which appears, to me at least, to follow from the admission of labour candidates in large numbers, as a good thing not for themselves only, not for their own great class only, but for all classes and for the State at large. I place the extension of the number of these labour members upon a ground

no narrower than that. It is for the benefit of us all that there should be a considerable increase of the number of labour members in Parliament. Well, if that is so, are they to be fined for conferring this boon upon the public? It is a boon given to the public.

Why should they, and how can they, bear the expenses which necessarily attend their election to the House of Commons and their residence in London? Is it fair to say that the constituencies, the respective constituencies, should bear those expenses? It would be perfectly fair if those constituencies were only conferring a benefit on themselves. But our ground is that they are conferring a benefit on the State, and if they are conferring a benefit on the State, and if labour candidates, from the very definition of the term, are, in most cases, persons who are not in a position to bear the charges of residence in London apart from their homes and their usual occupations, I say nothing can be stronger, nothing can be more irresistible than the claim of such persons—of persons chosen by the constituencies, whose right to choose we admit, and who, in the case supposed, are exercising that right in a specially beneficial manner. Nothing, as I hold, can be clearer than the title of such men—men whose private means are inadequate to the performance of the public duty put on them—to receive such aid from the public treasury as may be necessary in order to enable them to discharge the task which, for the public benefit as well as under public authority has been imposed on them. I do not enter into the other questions connected with the subject of a pecuniary provision of this kind. I only state, and state with very great confidence of conviction, the proposition which has just proceeded from my lips.

There is, however, another branch of this question, gentlemen, that we must not forget. Although rural interests are little connected with the town of Newcastle, I have no doubt they are very familiar to many of the members of the Federation. I will run very rapidly over the different points belonging to this branch of the great subject of Labour, though, in my opinion, they are points long ago inscribed in the Liberal creed



We have done, perhaps, no more than justice to the Government in acknowledging that they deserved well of the country, by passing a County Councils Bill<sup>1</sup>; but we are not satisfied with the County Councils Bill, except for the principle it embodies. It is based upon the principle of local government, and just as in the case of the Household Suffrage Bill of 1866 it fell to the Liberal party to lay hold upon the acknowledgment of the principle, and then, in spite of opposite influences, to give it full effect, so we now lay hold on the principle of County Councils. And we affirm that it is among the high and indispensable duties of the party, when it has the necessary power and influence in Parliament, to proceed to provide for the establishment of district councils and parish councils, and thereby to bring self-government to the very doors of the labouring men throughout the country. Further, I will add boldly that it will be their duty to enact compulsory powers for the purpose of enabling suitable bodies to acquire land upon fair and suitable terms, in order to place the rural population in nearer relations to the land, to the use and profit of the land which they have so long tilled for the benefit of others, but for themselves almost in vain. That also is among the great duties which lie before you in connection with the labour question.

Let me add yet one more, though the subject is a complex one, and does not bear being unfolded here—that which is known as the reform of the land laws, a great subject, both economical and political. That reform of the land laws, that abolition of the present system of entail, together with just facilities for the transfer of land, is absolutely necessary in order to do anything like common justice to those who inhabit the rural parts of this country, and whom, instead of seeing them, as we now see them, dwindle from one census to another, I, for my part, and I believe you, along with me, would heartily desire to see maintained, not in their present number only, but in increasing numbers over the whole surface of the land.

I am afraid, ladies and gentlemen, I have tried you severely

<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Act, 1888.

upon these subjects. But one word more I must say, though it will be a very brief one. I don't intend to enter as the utterer of a definite judgment upon the difficult questions that have been lately raised with regard to the hours of labour further than this: All persons, I am sure, have witnessed with satisfaction and sympathy—ay, with the liveliest pleasure—the large reductions in the amount of toil exacted from our fellow-subjects and fellow-citizens which have been achieved within the last twenty or thirty years. We wish well to all further reductions which can be achieved without violation of the rights of any man. We wish in an unqualified manner to see the progress of such changes, for the lot of labour it is absolutely certain will, as long as this human dispensation lasts, continue sufficiently severe, and it ought to be a subject of unmixed joy to us that there have been improvements which have not militated against the principles of liberty.

Upon the further question whether it is possible to pass a compulsory law binding upon all labourers for reducing their labour to a certain time, or by a certain number of hours, I would say, before uttering a word on that principle, that I should be very glad to be assured that those who now receive for long hours very low wages were to receive, in full at least, those low wages for the short hours. But, gentlemen, it will require more than a mere majority in certain trades that are highly organised—it will require more even than a majority in all trades all over the country, so to bind the minority that they shall be the subjects of coercive proceedings if they are unwilling, or if they find themselves unable in justice to those dependent upon them, to conform to the new standard. I give no absolute judgment upon a question which has not yet, I believe, by an appeal to the country been sufficiently examined; but I recommend much circumspection, and much careful examination before proceeding to steps, or even to the recommendation of steps, which may prove to be at once premature and irretrievable, and which therefore ought not to be hastily adopted.

Now, gentlemen, I have named to you the name of Ireland.

You will not be surprised if I think it requires to be more than merely named. I always observe that instead of getting tired of the name of Ireland, our Liberal meetings hail with eagerness the mention of it, for this reason, no doubt, among others, though not for this reason alone, that they know that the constitutional machine never can do its work until the great Irish question is disposed of.

It is the language of our opponents at present that the Government deserve well of the country for these reasons: first, that they are going to introduce a Local Government Bill for Ireland; and, secondly, that their policy in Ireland has been successful. A very few minutes will not be thrown away upon some examination of these propositions. A Local Government Bill is to be introduced, but it is to be introduced in consequence of what may fairly be called a death-bed repentance, for this is the sixth year of the Parliament. There was a pledge at the last general election to have no coercion. There was a pledge not to engage British credit for the purchase of Irish land, and there was a pledge to have local government in Ireland. They have spent the first five years in breaking two of their pledges,<sup>1</sup> and in the sixth year, when *in articulo mortis*, they have a scheme for redeeming the third pledge, and so large is the clemency of the Liberal party that I am sure their altered resolution will be received with open arms. We rejoice in their intention to do right, even at the last minute of the eleventh or twelfth hour. I admit that one of the reasons why we rejoice is this, that whatever local government they establish in Ireland must assist the Irish people in the demand for their national rights. Every popularly-elected body in Ireland, whatever you may call it, will be a new focus of thought, and will give a new vent for its expression. You may say it will be one of excitement or of agitation, but a focus it will be of something or other which will tend in the direction of the fulfilment of the national wish. And as we have seen the mode in which Toryism received free

<sup>1</sup> By passing the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1887, and the Land Purchase Bill, 1891.

education this year, and in which it has received some previous measures, so we shall see what sort of a smile the Tory and Dissident countenance will put on when the Irish Local Government Bill is presented. One thing we know: this Bill will not be a real affirmation of the principle of equal rights. If I have gathered correctly the intentions of the Government from the public journals, it has been announced already that no control of the police will be allowed to the Irish people. Well, but what is control of the police? First of all, it is that of which in Newcastle I have myself enjoyed the advantage to-night, in obtaining access through admirably ordered streets to the great building in which we are assembled. The towns of this country have full control of the police, and the counties of this country are acquiring it, and very soon will have it in full

Gentlemen, it is idle to talk of local government without control of the police. Control of the police means making local provision for the safety of life and property, and I affirm that the whole history of local government, from its cradle to its majority, has been the history of a system devised for this purpose before all others—the purpose of enabling the inhabitants of each district to make provision for the security of their own lives and properties. If you talk of a system of local government which does not include a power to the people to secure their lives and property through the police, you might just as well talk of establishing a House of Commons, and yet depriving it of the power of regulating and deciding the taxes of the people. I think, under these circumstances, that we at any rate can afford to wait with perfect calmness and satisfaction the production of the Local Government Bill of the Government. And you may depend upon it that what we shall do when it appears is what we have done on all occasions. We shall endeavour to resist and to arrest what is bad; to extend and develop what is good, and to make it subservient to the purposes of sound and enlightened government.

Then you are told also that there has been a great success of the system of government that has been pursued for the last

five years in Ireland. I do not accept that assertion. I believe it to be perfectly untrue, and I will give you a very few particulars in support of my disbelief. You will admit that I have got a long way in my speech without troubling you with a single figure. I will give you two or three as I now draw near the close, and I think they are tolerably instructive.

When our opponents talk of crime in Ireland, you must understand that the word bears a totally different meaning to what the word means in England. They do not mean murders, robberies, arsons, rapes, housebreaking, and the like; they mean resistance to the payment of rent. That is the interpretation of the word crime. I admit that out of the refusal to pay rent crime has grown; but then it should be punished as crime, whereas the sole policy of the present Government has been not to punish crime, not to wait to see whether opposition to the payment of rents believed to be unjust or impossible develops into crime, but to interfere with private liberty in a manner which in this country would not have been tolerated for a moment. They would not have dared here to interfere with it, and to have prevented these combinations which are the only weapons that a poor people, and a people like the Irish people, can resort to in self-defence. Crime, then, pray if I use the word, remember, means these agrarian combinations. Now, it is the case of these agrarian combinations which have received but too much of justification from the old laws and the old administration of Ireland, which at times undoubtedly have assumed the most formidable character and have been a great plague and curse to the country, while themselves springing out of other evils the nature of which it is not possible now to examine and set forth.

But, gentlemen, the present Government have never had to face a serious state of crime in connection with these combinations. In 1885 there were 244 agrarian offences, and that was an increase of no less than 182, or about 20 per cent. upon the preceding year. In 1885 the Tories came into office, and proceeding under that view, with that increase of 20 per cent.

they declared that they would have nothing to do with the imposition of Coercion upon Ireland. In 1886 there was a further but very much smaller increase. The Election was over; the compact with the Irish National party was at an end. The increase was 112, or say about 10 or 12 instead of 20 per cent. The Tories introduced their Coercion Bill.<sup>1</sup> I will go presently to the cause, the circumstances, under which that increase took place. For the present I only refer to its amount. In the last five years the number of 1056 has been happily diminished to 519, or by one-half. This is trumpeted as a marvellous, as an unprecedented, an almost miraculous success, which nothing but the very climax and perfection of statesmanship could have effected. I see my right hon. friend, Sir George Trevelyan,<sup>2</sup> who was in Ireland with Lord Spencer,<sup>3</sup> and what happened then? When Lord Spencer went to Ireland, and when a Liberal Coercion Bill was passed, the number of offences was not a thousand—it was 4439; and that number of 4439 was reduced not to one-half, it was reduced to one-sixth. The number in the year 1884, the last year of unbroken Liberal Government, was 762.

But I cannot leave the matter there. I admit that there was a small increase in the number of offences in 1886, and I ask you two questions: first, to what causes was that increase due; and, secondly, to what is due the removal of the increase and the substitution of a diminishing process? That increase was due to two causes. The first was the prevalence of an extreme severity of distress in the year 1886, and the total incapacity of a large portion of the peasant occupiers to pay their rent. That was the first cause; and we know perfectly well that if extreme distress occurs in any district of this country, some increase of offences against the law will infallibly follow. But there was another cause, and it was this: In 1886, Parliament was entreated and conjured from various quarters of the House to make some provision—at least some

<sup>1</sup> The Criminal Law (Ireland) Amendment Act, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1892-84.

<sup>3</sup> Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 1882-85.

temporary provision—for meeting this great and heavy pressure of distress in Ireland. But Parliament absolutely refused to make such a provision.<sup>1</sup> The House of Commons did then what the House of Lords had done in 1880, when they were asked to provide compensation for disturbance. They refused to adopt a timely measure that would have adjourned the difficulty until a full examination had been made and a substantive remedy could be applied. The consequence was that an increase of illegality followed that misconduct of the Parliament, that utter and absolute refusal of the Parliament to do its duty in 1886 by making a temporary provision for the incapacity of many Irish occupiers to pay their rent; and that was the cause, and the sole cause, of the increase of offences. The chief responsibility of that increase of agrarian crime, such as it was, rests upon the Government of Lord Salisbury and the Parliament of 1886.

And why have these offences diminished? First of all, because the period of distress has passed away, and with that period of distress the disposition to offence, which of course it stimulated, has passed away also. Secondly, because Parliament in 1887, after the increase of offences had taken place, passed a remedial Act, a supplement to the Land Act of 1881, and in some important respects an extension of the Land Act. The consequence has been that the Irish people have received under the operation of that measure a great amount of relief from difficulties which they were unable to surmount, and therefore the rate of agrarian offences has largely diminished. These are operations with which all persons are familiar who have looked into the history of crime, meaning thereby agrarian crime, in Ireland. As to general crime, I believe I am correct in saying that Ireland does not present a diminution. According to an account which has been supplied me by a gentleman who has himself undertaken the responsibility of authorship on the subject, there is, on the contrary, a small increase of ordinary crime in Ireland within the last few years, but of that you hear nothing. No crime seems to be important for

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Parnell's Tenant's Relief Bill was thrown out by 297 to 202.

exhibiting the state of Ireland in the view of the present Government, except that which touches the collections of the rents of the landlords. But, gentlemen, there is another consideration which has operated more powerfully still in disposing the Irish people towards habits of legality. I am sorry to say that during these five years it is beyond dispute the Irish people have necessarily become more and more estranged from the administration of the law, as regards the judicature of the country, as regards the magistracy, as regards the constabulary. For many long years there has not been a time when the people have been more alienated from the action of many members of those bodies, and, above all, from the spirit at headquarters which for the most part controls and governs them. But another counteracting cause of happier origin and happier spirit has powerfully worked upon the Irish people, and that is the friendship of the people of Great Britain. They have seen the conduct of the Liberal party, and they have interpreted that conduct as the true index of the sentiment of the country at large. It is for us to carry to a decisive issue the question whether they are well justified in the inference which they so draw.

But, at the stage which matters have now reached, can we make no appeal to those who oppose us? Can we do nothing to reach their understandings, or to move their hearts? In the hours of silent reflection, and apart from all excitement of passion and of controversy, I ask myself, what is the motive that induces our opponents to persist in this, for them, hopeless contest? Usually a great party engaged in a great battle has some great object before it. What is the object that addresses itself to them? Is it because they are governed by fear of the Irish nation? Well, the Irish nation are under five millions, and they are always fond of assuring us that out of this five millions two millions are resolute on their side. Then how strange the position! Two millions of Irishmen faced by three millions who it is supposed have diabolical intentions to oppress them! But behind these two millions—a minority one would think not wholly incapable of making some effort at



self-defence—behind these two millions there are thirty-five millions of Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Welshmen, not one of whom would tolerate for a moment the slightest indication on the part of the Irish majority to oppress the Irish minority. Could fear be at the root of this position? Well, if it is not fear, is it for the reputation of the country that the old policy towards Ireland is continued? Well, gentlemen, the reputation of a country is measured by a standard which we can easily get at; it means what its neighbours think of it. The reputation of Russia at this moment is probably very high with certain parties within Russia itself, but would not, I am afraid, be quite so high if measured by the general opinion of the civilised world. But where is the general opinion of the civilised world, where is the reputation of England, with reference to its conduct to Ireland? A condemnatory verdict has long ago been pronounced, and in the whole public opinion and in the whole literature of every civilised country on this or on the other side of the Atlantic, you cannot find a single exception to the rule that every competent, every creditable, every weighty, every decent witness admits, and for generations has proclaimed, in terms most unqualified, that the long inveterate conduct of England towards Ireland has grievously lowered its high character and has been unworthy of its general fame. Is it, then, because they think their policy contributes to the strength of an empire? But the strength of an empire consists in the union of the entire country and all its inhabitants, and it is not strength but weakness which results, and must result, from compelling the people of Ireland to continue in permanent alienation from the legislation of this country on those matters which lie nearest to their heart, and which they believe to be the most vitally connected with their interest. Is it, then, to the interest of the public purse? Well, the public purse is a question on which I should always endeavour to speak with strict accuracy; but I will venture to say that a sum not less, probably more, than three millions of money is annually thrown into the sea under the operation of our present legislation towards Ireland, which would be retrieved if that legislation

underwent a beneficial change. And unhappily this is not merely money wasted, but money spent if not for the purpose of producing, yet with the effect of producing, alienation and estrangement, and the value of which, could it be stated as a money value, is far greater than the waste.

Well, lastly, gentlemen, we have the fact of the arrears of public business. You never can overtake the mass of work in which you are already involved, and which increases from year to year, until this terrible Irish controversy is out of the way. The effect of it has been, during the whole of my political life, that a fraction of the population of the United Kingdom, hardly amounting to one-eighth or one-ninth part, necessarily consumes an enormous portion of its legislative time, and makes it impossible for it to perform its proper office. Well, gentlemen, you have come to the period at which it is quite clear that there must be either friendship or enmity with Ireland. But I wish to call your attention to one important circumstance, and it is this: There has been, unfortunately, that alternative before England for centuries; but in other ages, when enmity and not friendship was chosen as the alternative, it was the enmity of states or of classes, and not the enmity of peoples. But you have arrived at a point decisive in your history; and now for the future—if, say after the next election, this enmity is to continue—it will be the enmity of peoples and not of states. To see one country oppressed by the rulers of another state is heartrending. But, gentlemen, this is not a question of cruel tyrants; this is not a question of selfish oligarchies. Six millions of you, by your votes, determine the course which the Imperial policy is to follow, and with that power you must accept the duties and the responsibilities which belong to it. If Ireland is oppressed hereafter it will be oppressed by you, by the people of this country, and allow me to say that the spectacle of one people oppressing another is a spectacle the saddest, the most heartrending, and perhaps the most revolting which the wide surface of the earth can present to the human eye. I will never believe that this great nation will place itself in such a position. And in truth,

gentlemen, this friendship has been considered, and has, as we think, in some degree been decided. The declaration has been made, and made in favour of friendship. It has been made in the most constitutional manner, by the exercise of the elective franchise, and by the results obtained at the polls. Those results, which for a long time were overlooked or ridiculed by the organs and the voices of our opponents, they now begin to see and to admit to be somewhat formidable to their plans, and the only refuge which remains to them is in "the play of other parts of the constitution." No, gentlemen, we believe that those elections which have tested here, there, and everywhere, in constituencies of every possible variety, the sense of the people, have afforded us a safe indication of that which is to come. The sense of these constituencies has been declared, and what has it said? It has uttered words of soberness, of justice, and of truth. But there are some ears in this world to which unhappily that which is sober, just, and true has but a slow and partial access. Let them, then, reflect on this; the verdicts that the constituencies have spoken are not only that which is sober, just, and true, but also they speak what everyone will understand: they speak the inevitable. Upon these verdicts Ireland relies. You have watched the conduct of Ireland in the difficult circumstances of the last nine months, and that conduct I do not hesitate to risk saying on your behalf has evoked in every breast a responsive voice of sympathy, and an increased conviction that we may deal freely and yet deal prudently with our fellow-subjects beyond the Channel. Such is your conviction. On her side she reposes in full trust on the evidence of the recent facts; she believes that when the opportunity arrives, the general sense of the country will ratify the judgment that has already been given at nearly a hundred points of its surface; she believes that the entire people of Great Britain will, by a great and decisive majority, determine to meet and to dispose of those demands which are now made upon them, she believes, alike by their honour, by their interest, and by their duty before God and man.

# THE CONDITION OF THE RURAL POPULATION

LONDON, DECEMBER 11, 1891

A Conference of more than 400 agricultural labourers was held in London on December 10th, under the auspices of the National Liberal Federation. The experiment was a novel one. After the delegates had been entertained at breakfast at the Holborn Restaurant, Mr Gladstone addressed them. Dr. Spence Watson presided on the occasion.

DR. SPENCE WATSON AND GENTLEMEN,—You, sir, in speaking from the chair, have but confirmed as the highest authority, the accounts which have reached me from every quarter, in some cases from eye-witnesses, of the character of the proceedings which have marked this memorable conference, and have assured me of that which I had confidently anticipated, and that which I know now as established beyond doubt, that these proceedings have been signalised throughout by all the features which are the legitimate means and sure precursors of victory—I mean by union, by moderation, and by decision. I believe, gentlemen, that you know your own minds too well for me to be able to render you on this occasion any substantial service. I can hardly claim myself to be a practical man in the rural administration of this country, but I have lived long in rural districts, and have had many opportunities of observation, and I feel with you that the time has come when a course of efforts should be commenced that is not to terminate with any single crisis, or occasion, but only with the attainment of the just ends which are in view. The best I can hope to do is to present to you that view of your question which suggests itself to a practical man occupying a position which at all events has given him the advantages of a tolerably long experience, and in which I hope I may say that he has not been, and

is not at the present moment, altogether wanting in sympathy with every section of the people.

In my view the labour question is of a very long range indeed. That great controversy which has mainly occupied and agitated the public mind for the last six years—the subject of Home Rule for Ireland—is really part of the labour controversy, because you know very well that the bulk of those on whose behalf you and we have been struggling are either labourers themselves in the strictest sense of the word, or are small farmers in a condition essentially analogous to that of labourers. That is the first, and I will venture to say the foremost, division of the great labour question. Then there comes the subject which Dr. Watson assisted so ably in the discussion of at Newcastle,<sup>1</sup> and that was the consideration of another great branch of the labour question—what I may call the organised labour population of the country. Because you must recognise the fact—that which has been the fact, but which I hope is to be so no longer—that while many of the trades of this country, to their own great advantage, and to our great advantage, and the advantage of the nation and the State, have established among themselves powerful and effective organisations, you, on the contrary, have until now been little more than an aggregation of individuals, and you who present to us the great subject of rural labour and the condition of the rural population, you while, perhaps, you have the most to do in the just preparation of your means of action and in bringing them to the front, you, I think, also present, as far as Great Britain is concerned, the most urgent case of all. I call it the most urgent case, and I think the proof of that urgency is obvious.

The proof of it lies in the constant migration of the rural population into the towns. I do not speak of the whole of that migration, because undoubtedly the trades of this country—associated with its vast, world-wide commerce—must and ought to expand, and I am thankful to say do expand, under the influence of sound and liberating legislation, much faster than

<sup>1</sup> See the preceding speech in this volume.

we can expect the rural industry to expand. Some overplus — if there were an overplus—of the rural population no one could be sorry to see pass into the towns to meet their demands, but the case which we have before us is far more than that. We have in many parts of the country not only a stationary but a decreasing rural population. I look upon that decrease of the rural population—call it what you like, and explain it as you like—as a great national calamity. There are no efforts that ought not to be made; there are no just sacrifices that ought not to be encountered, in order that, proceeding upon sound principles, we may, if possible, endeavour to keep the rural population at home so long as they wish to stay there. The process by which that state of things can be stopped—leaving the rural labourer in a condition in which he can hardly hope to keep his wife and children even with an insufficient supply of the necessaries of life—is to restore his moral and his social freedom. This question of labour is one of many branches—far more branches than I am able to set adequately before you—more, probably, than you, in your rapid but well filled meeting, have been able thoroughly to discuss. I will only enumerate some of those branches first which are common to the two great divisions of the labour question—I mean the organised labour and the rural labour. That is the phrase I adopt, and you will understand it for the sake of distinction so far as the present moment is concerned. When I look to those two branches, I will mention only in order to set rapidly aside the points in respect to which their direct interests are interests in common, and bear upon the same subjects of legislation.

For instance, there is the question of election charges. When, very often at a great personal sacrifice, candidates receive the suffrages of the constituencies and are sent to Parliament—an end which has been most beneficially attained to a limited extent, and which we all hope will be attained to a much wider extent—we have to take care that they shall not be met with the frightful, not absolutely insurmountable, for courage has surmounted it—but the frightful difficulty connected with defraying the expenses of Parliamentary life for men whose lot

is the lot of labour. That has been a point of great importance. The rural labour of the country and the organised labour of the country in the mining and manufacturing districts have been directed at the present day straight to this same point.

Another point is one which is wider still, and that is the division of the rates. Local rates have increased—have increased mostly for good cause. I think and hope that the people get value for their money, but the increase of these rates makes more urgent that which was always just—that which in the year 1872 the Government of the day proposed<sup>1</sup> and endeavoured to attain, but were defeated, partly, perhaps, by the crowd of business, but yet more by the determined opposition of the Tory party—I mean this important division of rates, always just, but now, in consequence of their increase, more urgent than it has ever been. They embrace another important class, whose affairs can hardly be discussed, I think, on account of the limitation of time within the compass of this meeting, I mean the farmers. For them this is a matter of great consequence, and I am sure they will understand that if on this particular occasion the attention and exercise of your minds is concentrated upon questions affecting the rural labouring population, it is not because we forget or depreciate the interests of the farmers, and are not anxious to see those interests promoted by every just and reasonable means.

There is one other question on which the common interest reaches to both branches of the labour of the country, and also concerns the labouring population of Ireland, and that is the law of conspiracy. That is a question with regard to which I earnestly hope that we shall very soon see our way, though I am not very sanguine so far as the residuary term, what I may call the death-bed period of the present Parliament is concerned. But, undoubtedly, I hope that in regard to that law of conspiracy, which has undergone a vast amendment on behalf of the organised labour of the country, but which still requires extensive change—a change will at the very earliest period be

<sup>1</sup> The proposal was made by Mr. Stansfeld, the President of the Poor Law Board.

brought about, for it is one that bears directly upon personal liberty and upon the right of the labouring population to combine by every means that the general principles of law permit, for the purpose of giving the greatest value they can to their labour, the commodity they have to dispose of. At present you have a special law of conspiracy—what is called the common law of conspiracy; and under cover of this common law, whether owing to neglect or to prejudice, there have grown up proceedings which have flowed from the mere will and personal notions or leanings of particular judges that have become in the aggregate extremely averse to the liberties of the people. We must get rid of that common law of conspiracy. We must let every man know what is and what is not an offence by clear enumeration, and we must provide for the rural population of this country, as well as for the population of Ireland, that nothing shall be a crime in relation to the prosecution of labour interests because it is done by a combination of men, unless it be in itself an offence against the letter and spirit of the law of the land.

I have mentioned these—there may be many others, but I cannot attempt an exhaustive enumeration, and I now come to the special field in which your present movements are to be conducted. Ah! gentlemen, the condition of the rural population of this country in the present, and yet more in the past, is a subject of painful reflection, and I am going to detain you for a few minutes with matter which I feel to be interesting—unless I deprive it of its interest by defects of communication—with respect to former years, and to show you what your fathers have gone through. I certainly am not here to damp your efforts—and, if I were, it would be in vain—or to say you have nothing to do in procuring improvements. You have much to do, but I wish to point out that something has been already done, and to indicate to you—although I indicate it with feelings of pain, of recoil, almost of horror—what has been the condition of the rural population of this country, by two or three, I think, authentic intimations. Do not be afraid if I carry you back as far as the year 1767. I do not mean to go



on continuously from that time; I shall proceed by skips and jumps, or, as the fashion is now to say, by leaps and bounds. I am going to read to you a few lines which are copied from a stone now existing in the park at Hawarden. The immediate occasion of the carving of this stone was the rebuilding of a mill; but for some reason or other, and I certainly cannot regret it, there were inscribed upon the stone these remarkable words, which any one may verify by reference to the stone. The appearance of the stone is just like the headstone of a grave, and the inscription begins thus:—"Trust in God for bread, and to the king for protection and justice. This mill was built in the year 1767." Then come the remarkable words, "Wheat was this year at 9s., barley at 5s. 6d. a bushel. Luxury was at a great height and charity extensive, but the poor were starved, riotous, and hanged." Now, pray bear in mind that is not meant as an inflammatory inscription. This mill is a mill close to the house in which we live, belonging to the property. It was meant, I believe, as an honest description of the state of things, and observe this, it is not speaking of what are called the dangerous classes, but of the poor, which means the masses of the people, and the description given of them is that luxury above them was at a great height, that charity also was extensive, but that of the body of them the characteristics were three—that they were starved, that in consequence of their being starved, and no one can wonder at it, they were riotous, and that the only cure for rioting was that they were hanged.

I come down from 1767 to 1812—that I think was the year—and my incident is this. I was attending a dinner privately given to a certain body of miners who were about to open a colliery, and this dinner was attended by a very old and remarkable old man, who had worked in the collieries of the district 40 years before. The date of the dinner was about 1850, or a little after 1850, and the period to which he refers was the period of 1812. I am pretty sure that that was the year—whether it was the year before or the year after it does not much signify—and that old man made, in a few words, one of the most remarkable speeches I have ever heard. He described the change which

he had lived to see in the condition of the people, which, in that district, I think is rather favourable than otherwise: and he described what it was in 1812. In 1812, I think, he stated, and I believe (though it seems now almost incredible, I have seen it verified from public sources), wheat was at the enormous price of 20s. a bushel; five times over what, not at the present moment, because it has risen a little, but what for several years past you have paid for the staff of life; and potatoes—the other principal element of their subsistence—were at a corresponding price. That was not only a bad state of things, it was a horrible state of things, and no word short of horrible is fit to describe it. But recollect that for a long, long time, until light began to be thrown upon the dark places of the land by the action of a free Press—light such as has been thrown, to quote a particular instance, on the present position of the rural population in some districts by the correspondent of the *Daily News*<sup>1</sup>—I do believe that the bulk of the upper and wealthier classes were in total ignorance of the real condition of the people, and the marvel is that even unconquerable, inexhaustible fortitude and patience kept them silent through such a period, and allowed the whole country to be filled with the vaunts of military glory, and allowed those who had the means of making known their sentiments to habitually declare that never had there been in the history of England a time so great and grand as that; that our constitution was the envy of the world; and that happy were they who lived within the borders of England. Gentlemen, that was cant. I do not say it, was wilful falsehood—I am sure it was not— but it was unconscious, gross, and monstrous untruth, and we have to blush when we look back upon such a state of things. I must mention that my old friend stated the wages of the period when wheat and potatoes were at these monstrous prices. I cannot be absolutely certain to a shilling, but my firm belief and conviction is that the miner's wages—which, of course, as they ought to be, because of the more disagreeable work, were above the agricultural

<sup>1</sup> A series of articles in this journal, entitled "Life in Our Villages," and beginning in August 1891, had attracted much attention.

wages—were not more than 11s. a week. These are serious and sad things to consider, but it is a satisfaction to be able to say, that while that good old man recorded a beneficial change, that change has continued and extended, and instead of a wage of 11s. a week for miners—probably representing 9s. for agriculture—the present wages of that district are 18s. for agriculture, and 26s. on the average for miners.

I come now to my third testimony. I think I am really giving you—without any attempt at detail—testimonies that are of some point and weight. The third testimony was one that came casually to me one day, travelling on the Great Western Railway, when I found myself in a compartment with a Suffolk country doctor. This, again, was a few years after 1850. I cannot say exactly how many—probably about 1855 or 1856. Now, the repeal of the Corn Laws had done much for wages in many parts of the country, but no influences tending to a rise had, at that time, I think, crept into the rural districts. At any rate, I remember that the medical man—a man of decided intelligence, who was a parish doctor in Suffolk—said to me, “I assure you, sir, on the absolute ground of my medical experience and knowledge, that of the whole labouring population of the parish there is not a man, a woman, or a child who has food sufficient for the maintenance of full health.” These are deplorable, most deplorable facts. I rejoice to think we are rising above such a level as that, and I hope you think I have been justified in mentioning historical circumstances of such deep, though of most painful, and I might almost say shameful, state of things. Now, ground has been made in that respect. In regard to the means of subsistence for many classes, immense ground has been made, though for some classes and for some parts of the country, undoubtedly, that ground has been more than limited.

But I must refer to ground made in another direction, which my hon. friend in the chair was kind enough to mention, assigning to me a much greater share of honour than I deserved, but unquestionably the enactment of the franchise for the rural districts in 1884-85—after a desperate effort, you will remember, in the House of Lords to defeat it—that change, by the determina-

tion of the people of this country, was carried, and it was carried in connection with the secret vote. I am afraid that without the secret vote it still would have been very advantageous; but undoubtedly the secrecy of voting was the necessary complement of that legislative change, and the necessary guarantee of the independence and liberty of the working-man. And here I wish to say one word more. For a considerable time after the enactment of secret voting, it appeared to me, and I believe it was the case, that the country labourers felt a great deal of distrust. They thought that in some way or other the vote would be discovered. Now, I am the last man to say to the labourer that if he is asked about his vote he should give a misleading answer, but I think the less answer he gives the better. He may depend upon it—experience has proved it, and he is coming, I am thankful to say, to feel it more and more every day—that unless he himself chooses to declare his vote, which he is perfectly entitled to do if he thinks fit, no man living can find it out. Parliament dealt honestly and carefully with that subject, and surrounded the enactment with provisions that secured its efficiency, and its efficiency means the absoluteness of its secrecy. This is an important change; I may say that it is the master-key of the situation. It is by means of this franchise, and this just influence in the councils of the State, that you are enabled to tread your path with firmness and with a consciousness of strength. By means of that just political influence, rely upon it that no very long time will elapse before you attain in the main all the just objects which you have in view.

I shall not attempt to go through the detail of all the items that have been so clearly and ably set forth in the proceedings at Newcastle, and in other proceedings, but I think that I am not far wrong in saying that, at the present moment, so far as your feelings have a centre they are centred very much in that little phrase—the establishment of Parish Councils. I am led to desire the establishment of Parish Councils mainly by two considerations. The first is that they are the necessary complement of any good system of local government. A good system of local government is the best accompaniment and

guarantee for a good system of central government. But also local government must be brought home to your own doors. There are, as has been well pointed out, a multitude of purposes for which it is impossible that a County Council should be efficient, and if it attempted to be efficient in those matters it would lose the efficiency which undoubtedly it possesses for other valuable purposes. It is as the complement of your freedom that I wish, in the first instance, for Parish Councils; but I wish them for another reason which is more material. I ask myself what is the principal immediate aim for which this remarkable conference has been brought together? After the facts that have been laid before us as to the condition of the agricultural labourer and his power of supporting himself and his wife and children in many portions of the country, I do feel that the improvement of his material condition is the central and vital object which has most of all brought you here to-day. It is, in my opinion, very dangerous to talk to men about improving their material condition through public legislation unless you clearly see your way. I do not pretend to see my way as to everything that might be desired. There are difficulties in the road, without doubt, but we do see our way, I think, as to a very important improvement in the condition of the rural population. Now, these councils, as you have been told most justly—and I will not dwell upon the particulars except to pass through them—must have the control, for example, of parish charities, the care of roads, footpaths, commons, and rights of way. Rights of way, for example, are most material to be preserved. Private interest is always awake looking for the opportunity of extinguishing them here and there. How is the County Council to stop that? How is even a District Council in a large county to stop that? You want men who know the ground yard by yard and inch by inch, and it is nonsense to talk about circuses<sup>1</sup> as alternatives

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury, in a speech at Birmingham on November 24, 1891, said: "If, among the many duties the modern State undertakes, the duty of amusing the rural population should be included, I should rather recommend a circus or something of that kind." This remark had been the subject of much discussion.

to Parish Councils. I mention that not as a thing of vital principle in itself, but as a clear, defined, and manifest purpose, which requires a local authority conversant with the minutest details of space and of local history; and a Parish Council, parish assembly, call it what you like, if it is a true and efficient parish assembly—call it a vestry, or what you like; I do not want to quarrel with any name whatever so long as the thing is good and effective—but this is one of those instances which show the real practical utility which these Parish Councils have in view. Then, again, there is the question of sanitary, or rather insanitary, dwellings, and the question of schools. Greater independence is desired by the parents of children; and that also is a subject requiring much consideration. Then I touch very tender ground, but it is a subject that lies deep in the hearts of most of the rural population, that which is indicated by the words “the workhouse.”

It is a lamentable fact if, in the midst of our civilisation and at the close of the nineteenth century, the workhouse is all that can be offered to the industrious labourer at the end of a long and honourable life. I do not enter into the question now in detail. I do not say it is an easy one; I do not say that it will be solved in a moment; but I do say this, that until society is able to offer to the industrious labourer at the end of a long and blameless life something better than the workhouse, society will not have discharged its duties to its poorer members, and the aims of this remarkable conference will not have been fully attained. But, as I have said, we are here to look not simply on the ideal—though the ideal ought never to be put wholly out of view—but at the practical; and I do say that the Parish Councils, in my opinion, constitute the straight road, the necessary road, and the only road, to our installing the labourer in that which is most of all vital to him in the immediate improvement of his condition—namely, the freer access to and use of the land. I think the opinion among you and among those who sympathise with you in the country does not recognise it in any way sufficient to that which has

been done in the way of improvement in our law.<sup>1</sup> It is condemned as inefficient.

We want, not a nominal acknowledgment of a compulsory principle with regard to the taking of land; we want that principle of compulsion absolutely embodied in effective provisions. As respects gardens—the first, the most vital, and the most useful of all elements, so far as they go, though possibly more immediately associating itself with the letting of cottages—and as respects allotments, it is the Parish Council, and the Parish Council alone, through which a good system can be made effective. Whether it should be done entirely by the authority of the Parish Council I will not ask, because it is evident that as we have in view the establishment of a higher council or authority—a County Council, or District Council, or Parish Council—the division of powers between them is a matter of considerable anxiety and great importance; and it may be that the Parish Council would not in every case be strong enough to wield these compulsory powers without some assistance from the higher authority. I will not enter into that; but it is through these public institutions of local government, and through them alone, that we can do anything effective, and anything upon a large scale, for improving the access of the labourer to the land and his freer use of it for his own benefit. I have seen lately a declaration by members of the Government that they are thinking whether it will be possible to enable the rural population to become purchasers of small holdings. That is all very well, but we have not reached the point, and the rural population in the less forward districts have not quite reached the point at which they think so much about purchase as they will think about occupation and use. It is through the council that the occupation and use will be made easy.

And here let me refer to an important point. As far as I know, although Toryism, which, as you know, now includes what was once Liberalism, for shortness I call it all Toryism—there is no use in beating about the bush in these matters and wasting time—Toryism, having conceded the

<sup>1</sup> An Allotments Act had been passed in 1887.

principle that a local authority is in some way or another to have the power of purchase, has, I believe, shown a uniform jealousy of an arrangement of law under which the council would be enabled not only to purchase, but also to take land upon lease. Now, I own it is my opinion—you are practical men, and are better judges of it, perhaps, than I am—that the power of taking land upon lease for a sufficient time and with proper provisions for the termination of the lease would be very valuable additional power. It would simplify the matter. It would avoid all difficulties as to the raising of considerable sums of money, and when once the Parish Council—the public authority, that is the best phrase—the public local authority is in practical possession of the land, you will see what they can do. They can regulate the rents, they can make provision not only against extravagance of rent, but for adequacy in the holding; they can also make provision for a reasonable security in the tenure. That is a point upon which very likely many landlords would be jealous; but having the local authority for their tenant, and having the security of the rates for what the local authority have to pay them, the local authority would have its hands free to regulate the concession of land in every way, in every condition that appertains to its security and its profitableness, and in every way which the best interests of the people might direct.

I do not boast in this matter, for my time has been pretty well occupied in Parliament with one thing and another, and I admit I have no right to take a forward place with regard to this great question of the access of the labourer to the land—a gigantic question which I hope we shall see assuming in practice, as it always must have in thought, large dimensions. It is a comfort to me, so far as it goes, that some time ago—namely, in 1832, when I was already coming into Parliament, and when my political ideas generally were certainly not arranged upon precisely the same scale and model as that upon which they are now based—it is a comfort to me that I did, in addressing the electors of Newark, a very large pro-



portion of whom were rural labourers, express my strong opinion that the labourer ought to have much freer access to the land by means of allotting to him reasonable portions of it. So that it is no new opinion which I am broaching before you this day. You can compute the profit which will attach to the judicious use of these allotments. If the labourers are incompetent to make use of them by their own spare time, and by the occasional labour of their wives and growing children, well, I am very sorry, but you will have done your duty. My belief, however, is that they are perfectly competent, and that they will make use of them, and that, as far as I have seen, the estimate of £10 an acre of substantial profit which would be effected from these small holdings is not an unreasonable estimate. It is quite as likely, with an industrious man, to be below the mark as above it.

I mention here with great honour—I am speaking now of the management simply of the labour population—the name of Lord Tollemache.<sup>1</sup> He was a Tory, but as an employer he was an excellent man. I do not know whether he was a successful or a popular manager of his estates in all respects—that I do not touch on—but I know his management with regard to labour, and he told me himself very many years ago what it was. He had an estate in Suffolk and one in Cheshire—both large estates. In Suffolk he gave every man half an acre of arable land. In Cheshire, where the people were conversant with the management of cows, he gave, besides the half-acre of arable land, either two acres or three of grass for the cow. That idea of two acres or three acres for the cow has got of late into very queer company, and I believe that one gentleman<sup>2</sup> who propounded it did, in a Select Committee of the House of Commons, vote against repealing the law for restricting the movement of land in the market, certainly an odd way of going to work. But the

<sup>1</sup> Died December 10, 1890: "He was the finest practical agriculturist in the country. . . . Lord Tollemache's action in providing each of his cottage tenants with three acres and a cow was the origin of that historical phrase."  
—*The Times*, Dec. 11, 1890.

<sup>2</sup> Collings, one of the members for Birmingham.

special reason why I mentioned Lord Tollemache is this, and it is a point of great importance, inasmuch as the moral and social influence of the farmer in the parish is deservedly great. He told me that, when he started his half-acre plan in Suffolk, it was met with violent opposition. The farmers believed that this scheme would demoralise the labourers and ruin and break down the cultivation of the farms. He told me also that after he had lived a few years through the practical working of his scheme, there was a complete revolution of opinion among the farmers, and they found without exception, as I understood him to say, that they had better labourers, better work, and a more solid system; that they could depend upon their labourers; they knew when and where they had them; and they became, through practice, cordial friends of the system. It is a great thing to know that, because, though our object in the first instance is to attain these great ends, there is no doubt it will be of immense additional value if we can attain them in perfect harmony and concord with the judgment of all classes of the community.

I do not think I ought to detain you any longer. I have gone very superficially indeed over most of those matters. They are of a deep and most profound interest. What I have said I submit to you with great deference and great humility, because I think that the opinions of those who are in close contact with this class of questions are of far the greatest value. I only assure you that the opinion I expressed in 1832 is my opinion still. All the changes which have taken place in my political creed, or any appendages to it—well, these changes have not tended to make me less willing than I was then to see the labourer, who works so hard and so well for others, acquire the power of putting the spade into the land for his own advantage; and, though there are difficulties in our way, though the path of legislation is beset and encumbered with obstacles, allow me to say that I look forward to the issue with cheerful faith. I will not define the moment, or attempt to describe the means; but I say that now we have a constitutional machinery which, before any very long time, will

assert its own efficacy, and its own sufficiency for the attainment of every just end. And I do believe that we are approaching a period when we may hope to see industry in our rural districts placed in such a position as to have room and verge enough for a good provision for wife and family, and for the exercise of a reasonable forethought; when the circumstances of the labouring man may improve without the least diminution of, but on the contrary with the growth of, every guarantee for his independence; and when the rural population may sit down under the shadow of beneficent legislation with confidence in the laws, and with confidence in the Legislature, to live and die in contentment and in peace.

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