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A HUNDRED YEARS
OF
IRISH HISTORY

R. BARRY O'BRIEN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

JOHN E. REDMOND, M.P.

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BY
R. BARRY O'BRIEN

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"The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell" *"The Life of Lord Russell of Killowen"* *"Thomas Drummond"* etc.

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“ Politics are vulgar when they are not liberalised by history, and history fades into mere literature when it loses sight of its relation to practical politics.”

SIR JOHN SEELEY.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

EVENTS have marched forward since the publication of this little book. In 1906 the Government of Mr. Balfour fell. The Liberals came into office. They have been in office since. Previous to the General Election of 1906, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman pledged himself to bring forward a measure of Irish Constitutional Reform "leading up to the larger policy."

In 1907, the Irish people declared, at a Convention held in Dublin, that this measure "leading up to the larger policy" would not satisfy them, and they demanded the "larger policy" itself. In 1908 the House

of Commons passed a resolution declaring "that, in the opinion of this House, the solution [of The Irish problem] can only be obtained by giving to the Irish people the legislative and executive control of all purely Irish affairs, subject to the supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament."

In December, 1909, Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister, said :

"The solution of the problem can be found only in one way—by a policy which, while explicitly safe-guarding the supreme and indefeasible authority of the Imperial Parliament, will set up in Ireland a system of full self-government in regard to purely Irish affairs. For reasons which I believe to have been adequate the present Parliament was disabled in advance from proposing any

such solution, but in the new House of Commons, the hands of a Liberal Government and of a Liberal majority will in this matter be entirely free."

At the General Election which took place in January, 1910, and at the General Election which took place in December, 1910, the Liberal Party nailed the Home Rule colours still more resolutely to the mast; and after each Election the Liberals came back with a combined majority of 124 over their opponents. In this year, 1911, the Liberal Ministry stands pledged to introduce a Bill, in 1912, and to press it forward with vigour and persistence, for the establishment of an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive for the management of Irish affairs. In 1902 Home Rule was in the trough of the sea. It is now once more on the

crest of the wave ; and the haven for which Ireland has steered steadily in fair weather and in foul is at hand.

The House of Lords has ever been the arch enemy of Irish Reform—of all reform. There is now passing through Parliament a Bill—it will be law in a couple of months—to curb the power of the Lords, and to strengthen the authority of the people. The second clause of this Bill is a charter of political and social progress. It provides; that, “ it is expedient that the powers of the House of Lords be restricted by law, so that any such Bill which has passed the House of Commons in three successive sessions and, having been sent up to the House of Lords at least one month before the end of the session, has been rejected by that House in each of those sessions,

shall become law without the consent of the House of Lords on the Royal assent being declared : Provided that at least two years shall have elapsed between the date of the first introduction of the Bill in the House of Commons and the date on which it passes the House of Commons for the third time." When this measure takes its place on the Statute book, it will be no longer possible for an obsolete oligarchy to thwart the public will, and make representative government a sham.

Such has been the march of events during the past five years, and it is impossible to think of the position of the Liberal Ministry to-day, and of the effective blow which, in the name of the English democracy and with the decisive help of a compact Irish Party, they have

been able to deal at the most obstructive institution the world has ever seen, without recalling the memorable words of Mr. Lecky :

“ A majority of the Irish members turned the balance in favour of the great democratic reform bill of 1832, and from that day there has been scarcely a democratic measure which they have not powerfully assisted. When, indeed, we consider the votes they have given, the principles they have been the means of introducing into English legislation, and the influence they have exercised upon the tone and character of the House of Commons, it is probably not too much to say that their presence in the British Parliament has proved the most powerful of all agents in accelerating the democratic transformation of English politics.”

It will be well for English statesmen on both sides of the House of Commons to read this story of the "Hundred Years," and to learn the lesson which it teaches. It is a record of failure and of shame. Why ? Because English statesmen of all parties have never been moved, in their Irish policy, by the sympathetic sentiments which inspired the words addressed by Mr. Birrell to his friends at Manchester the other day : " Find out what is just ; then do what is generous."

J. E. REDMOND.

May, 1911.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

THE story of the “ Hundred Years ” (covering the period between 1800 and 1900) revised, and slightly enlarged, was originally delivered as a lecture before the Irish Literary Society, London. An Appendix has been added.

R. BARRY O'BRIEN.

INTRODUCTION.

MY DEAR O'BRIEN,—

You have done good work in drawing attention to the relations between England and Ireland during the last century. So far as I am aware, there is no history of that period, and Englishmen are perhaps less familiar with it than with any other period of Irish history. Each generation of Englishmen have comforted themselves with the reflection that they were righteous men, though their ancestors governed Ireland infamously. No Englishman justifies the government of Ireland in the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth century, and even the Englishman of

the latter part of the nineteenth century condemns the government of the men of the earlier part. But the truth is, no generation of Englishmen can plume themselves on their administration of Irish affairs. Ignorance and ineptitude are the characteristics of the English rulers of Ireland of every generation ; yet Englishmen talk of Irish ingratitude and sneer at Irish grievances. " What does Ireland now want ? " Pitt asked Grattan, in 1794, and " What does Ireland now want ? " is the stock question of English statesmen of the twentieth century. Englishmen constantly forget that they are the original wrong-doers, and that they have never acted so as to obliterate the memory of their misdeeds. Englishmen love national independence, but they cannot conceive how

other people should have this feeling too. A little girl was asked in a London school the other day what was the date of the Conquest of Ireland, and she answered, "The Conquest of Ireland began in 1169, and it is going on still." All English attempts to reconcile the Irish people to the English connection have failed. The reason for this is not far to seek. Your narrative alone makes it abundantly clear. When the Union was carried, and when a new era opened in the government of Ireland, England had a long score of misdeeds to wipe out; and how did she set to work? Were I to draw an indictment against English rule in Ireland I think I should confine myself to the nineteenth century. At a time of war and conquest you expect rough work, though it never must be

forgotten that the foreign invader is the original wrong-doer, and that whatever excuse may be offered for the excesses of a people rightly struggling to be free, no excuse can be offered for the foreign trespasser who comes to rob and destroy. But the qualities of the conqueror can best be judged when his conduct is tested by the work of ruling the conquered people. And how do the English rulers of Ireland in the nineteenth century stand the test? Englishmen are shocked when other nations do not take them at their word. An Englishman thinks that his promise should be accepted without suspicion, that the whole world ought to rely on the benevolence and wisdom of John Bull.

But what is the story which Irishmen have to tell of the benevolence and

wisdom of their English rulers in the nineteenth century ? First, Englishmen opened the Union Era by treachery and falsehood. England promised emancipation to the Catholics as the price of the Union, and that promise was shamefully broken. Twenty-eight years passed before the Catholics were emancipated, and then how was emancipation carried ? The wrong-doer may obliterate the memory of the wrong by some act of generosity, or even of tardy justice, magnanimously done. But was there anything generous, anything magnanimous, in the concession of Catholic Emancipation ? “ I am one of those,” said the Duke of Wellington, in introducing the Emancipation Bill in the House of Lords, “ who have probably spent a longer period of my life engaged

in war than most men, and principally in civil war, and I must say this, that if I could avoid by any sacrifice whatever, even one month of civil war in the country to which I was attached, I would sacrifice my life in order to do it, yet, my lords, this is the resource to which we must have looked—these are the means we must have applied to put an end to this state of things, if we had not made the option of bringing forward the measure for which I say I am responsible.” But when we say that England did tardy justice, and did it grudgingly, did it in a mean and craven spirit, we have not disposed of the case. Having passed some measure of justice—some inadequate measure of justice—she proceeded immediately to make it a dead-letter. Most important in this respect are the

words you quote from Mr. Lecky—so important, indeed, are these words, as showing the character of the English rule of Ireland during the past century, and as showing the bad faith of the English Government, that I cannot help transcribing them here.

“ In 1833—four years after Catholic Emancipation—there was not in Ireland a single Catholic judge or stipendiary magistrate. All the high sheriffs, with one exception, the overwhelming majority of the unpaid magistrates, and of the grand jurors, the four inspectors-general, and the thirty-two sub-inspectors of police, were Protestant. The chief towns were in the hands of narrow, corrupt, and, for the most part, intensely bigoted corporations. Even in a Whig Government not a single Irishman had a seat

in the Cabinet. For many years promotion had been steadily withheld from those who advocated Catholic Emancipation, and the majority of the people thus found their bitterest enemies in the foremost places."

"Trust us," Englishmen say, "and all will be right." The answer to this is, "What have you done in Ireland?"

You have conceded through fear, marred your concessions in the granting, and refused to carry them out in a fair and generous spirit.

What a ghastly story is the story of the Tithe War. Cromwell was a ruthless conqueror. His massacres at Drogheda and Wexford are among the infamies of history; and yet those infamies almost pale before this mean, petty, squalid struggle. I think it was Grattan who

said, "To find a worse Government than the Government of the English in Ireland, you must go to Hell for your policy, and to Bedlam for your discretion." It must be confessed that a more perfect illustration of the policy of Hell and Bedlam combined, than the Tithe War affords, can scarcely be conceived. The excuse given for Cromwell is that his were rough times. But what are we to say of the Tithe War which took place in the years of grace 1830-1835 ?

And what a miserable compromise ended this ghastly conflict. Bad faith, foolish legislation, criminal legislation, are, in the main, the marks of English rule in Ireland during almost the whole of the nineteenth century. The English people have no conception that between 1829 and 1869 no great measure of justice

was passed for Ireland. With the exception of the Melbourne Administration, 1835-1841 (which, let it be remembered, was kept in office by the Irish Vote), everything that happened served only to keep alive the original feeling of hatred and distrust between the two peoples. O'Connell suspended the demand for Repeal, during the Government of Lord Melbourne, to give the Union a fair trial. O'Connell kept faith with the Government, but the Government failed to carry any effective remedial measures for Ireland. On the failure of the Melbourne Administration, O'Connell once more raised the Standard of Repeal. What Englishmen do not understand is, that the failure of the Melbourne Administration was the turning-point in the relations of England and Ireland in the nineteenth

century. The great Repeal Movement of 1841-1846 rooted the idea of an Irish Parliament in the mind and heart of the Irish nation, and that idea will never be eradicated. Another fact which Englishmen do not understand is that between 1846 and 1869 the Irish question went backwards instead of forwards. The administration in Ireland, during the Government of Lord Melbourne, was calculated to reconcile the people to English rule, though the Government itself was unable to pass good laws for the country. But English administration as well as English legislation between 1846 and 1869 was calculated to make the name of England more detested than ever. This is a vital fact. Assuredly, it needs no argument to prove that a conqueror must proceed steadily, if not

rapidly, in the work of well-doing if he is ever to reconcile the conquered to his rule. But the English conqueror in Ireland has not proceeded steadily in a career of well-doing. Quite the contrary ; and the meanness of his rule in the nineteenth century has only served to add contempt to the hatred which his brutality in previous centuries inspired. The calamity of the Famine, and the terrible loss of population which it caused, was followed by stupid misgovernment. Nothing was done to reform the land system which Irishmen then knew, and which Englishmen now know, was the curse of the country. The country was allowed to bleed almost to death because a " foreign " Government (to use the language of Mr. Chamberlain) declined to pass the measures

which the people of the country knew and said were necessary for its salvation. It is impossible not to smile at the simplicity of Englishmen when they offer, as a compensation for the loss of national independence, the blessings of English rule ; practically urging that Englishmen know better how to rule any people on the face of the earth than the people themselves.

In 1860-1866 the Irish Land Question stood in a worse position than in 1835, 1845, or 1852. Thomas Drummond understood the Irish Land Question, and urged reform. In 1843 Sir Robert Peel appointed the Devon Commission. In 1845 the Commission reported in favour of legislation, and even Lord Stanley introduced a Bill in 1845 to carry out the recommendations of the Commission. In

1852 another Tory Government tried to carry measures of land reform. All these efforts failed. At last reform came in Church and land in 1869 and 1870, and how were these reforms carried? What claim do they establish for the gratitude of Ireland to the English Parliament? Fenianism disestablished the Church and carried the Land Act. "The Imperial Parliament," wrote Mr. Lecky, in 1871, "exercises for Ireland legislative functions, but it is almost powerless upon public opinion. It allays no discontent and attracts no affection." No wonder; for its practice has been to concede with reluctance, and to oppress without hesitation. "It is powerless upon public opinion." Naturally; for its aim habitually has been to suppress public opinion until the passions of the

people have been aroused, and Ministers have been swept off their feet by a storm of indignation and disloyalty.

Let it be borne in mind that up to 1869—always excepting the Melbourne Administration—not one single act was done by the English Parliament which was calculated to obliterate the memory of past wrongs, and to give the Irish people confidence in English statesmanship. And what has been done since? The Land Act of 1870 was a hopeless failure. Mr. Gladstone was under the impression that the Church Act and the Land Act of 1870 had settled the Irish question. In your “Life of Parnell” you report Mr. Gladstone as saying: “I do not think that Mr. Parnell or Irish matters much engaged my attention until we came back to government in 1880. You

see we thought the Irish question was settled. There was the Church Act, and the Land Act, and there was a time of peace and prosperity, and I frankly confess that we did not give so much attention to Ireland as we ought to have done. Then you know there was distress and trouble, and the Irish question came again to the front." Nothing can show more clearly the incompetence of English statesmen to understand the Irish question than that Mr. Gladstone, who had done more for Ireland than any other English statesman, should have believed he had settled the Irish question for all time, when, in point of fact, his Acts of 1869 and 1870 were unsettling Acts, and only the beginning of an era of reform. Yet Mr. Gladstone believed that it was both beginning and end. Despite

the efforts made by Isaac Butt and other Irish members between 1871 and 1876, nothing was done in the direction of land reform until the Land League came. Is there any honest Englishman who, looking the question fairly in the face, will assert that the English Parliament has any claim to the gratitude of Irishmen? One thing is perfectly clear, viz., that in the words of Mr. Lecky the English Parliament still fails to “allay discontent or to attract affection.” Assuredly if ever there was a case that required consideration in view of these facts, it is the demand of the Irish people, that, with this record before the world, they should be allowed to do, what it has been demonstrated the English Parliament cannot do, viz., to govern Ireland in accordance with Irish public opinion.

Despite the educational propaganda carried on by Mr. Gladstone between 1886 and 1893, it is much to be feared that not only the bulk of Englishmen, but many English statesmen, do not yet clearly understand the nature of the Irish demand, or the grounds on which it rests. I venture to say that there are many even intelligent Englishmen who do not know that there ever was a Parliament in Ireland ; while the number who are aware that the old Irish Parliament was almost coeval, and actually co-ordinate with the English Parliament, might be counted on the fingers of one's hand.

The first Irish Parliament was held in the reign of Edward I, in 1295. The earliest Irish statutes date from 1310. From 1295 to 1495 the Irish Parliament

was free from the control of the English Parliament. No law made in England was binding in Ireland. It was in nowise necessary for the English Parliament to ratify the Irish statutes. In 1495 the first attempt at any innovation was made. Poynings' law was passed. It provided (1) that all Acts hitherto passed in England should be binding in Ireland : (2) that no Parliament should hereafter be summoned in Ireland until the Viceroy had obtained the King's Licence to hold it : (3) that the heads of bills to be introduced in the Irish Parliament should be first submitted to the English Privy Council : (4) that the consent of King and Privy Council should be obtained before such bills were introduced. It will be seen that, servile as this Parliament was, it did not surrender its independence ;

it did not recognise England's right to make laws for Ireland.

It recognised the right of the King of England, who was also the King of Ireland, to exercise jurisdiction over Irish legislation as he did over English legislation, and it adopted English Acts previously passed. That was all. It still preserved co-ordinate authority, and this remained the state of things until the reign of George I. Then an Act was passed in 1719 which provided that "the King's Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords and commons of Great Britain, had, hath, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws to bind the people and the Kingdom of Ireland." This Act was an usurpation of the rights of the Irish Parliament. "It is true

indeed," says Swift, "that within the memory of man the English Parliaments have sometimes assumed the power of binding this kingdom by laws enacted there. Nevertheless, by the laws of God, of nature, and of nations, and of your country, you are and you ought to be as free a people as your brethren of England." The "freedom" of the Irish Parliament was finally established in 1782. Then the Irish Volunteers, with arms in their hands, forced England to repeal the Act of George I, and to re-establish the legislative independence of their country. "Be it enacted," so ran the English Act of the 23 George 3rd, chap. 28, "that the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by laws enacted by His Majesty and the Parliament of that Kingdom in all

cases whatsoever, and to have all actions and suits at law and in equity which may be instituted in that Kingdom, decided in His Majesty's Courts therein finally and without appeal thence, shall be and is hereby declared and ascertained for ever, and shall at no time hereafter be questioned or questionable." Despite this solemn declaration, the Irish Parliament was destroyed in 1800 by force and fraud, and another chapter was added to the story of English falsehood and treachery in the history of Ireland. Ireland never ceased to protest against the Act of Union. O'Connell demanded its repeal. His agitation was put down by force. It was the old story so well told by Swift in his own day. "The love and torrent of power prevailed. Indeed the arguments on both sides were

invincible. For in reason, all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery ; but in fact, eleven men well armed will certainly subdue a single man in his shirt."

In 1870 Isaac Butt made a new departure. While fully recognising and asserting Ireland's right to legislative independence, he proposed, yielding to political exigencies, a compromise by which an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive should be established for the management of Irish affairs, reserving to the Imperial Parliament the control of Imperial affairs. Parnell took up the question where Butt had left it, and in 1886 Mr. Gladstone offered the Irish members a "Statutory" Parliament, practically on the lines laid down by Butt.

This compromise was accepted by the Irish members, and by the bulk of the Liberal Party, but it was defeated in the House of Commons, and Mr. Gladstone's Ministry was destroyed.

On coming back to power in 1892, he returned to the subject, and in 1893 carried through the House of Commons another Home Rule Bill. This Bill was rejected by the House of Lords, and dropped. As the question of Home Rule stood in 1895 (when Lord Rosebery, who had succeeded Mr. Gladstone as Home Rule Prime Minister, left office) it stands still. It has been recently brought to the front by the combination of two extraordinary causes : (1) The action of the Government, who, since the passing of the Irish Local Government Act, have been drawing nearer to Home Rule

without apparently knowing it, and (2) by the action of Lord Rosebery, who, since he left his lonely furrow, has been backing out of Home Rule without, let us hope, apparently knowing it either. The advance of the Government has given heart to the Nationalists, and the retreat of Lord Rosebery has, for very shame, revived the Gladstone tradition, and recalled the best memories of Liberalism.

The Irish members have one advantage over English parties. They know their own minds. They know what they want. The present Government is in a state of bewilderment in Ireland. His Majesty's Opposition is in a state of bewilderment everywhere. Ireland has faith neither in Government nor in Opposition. She is watching the political situation in

England with keenness, and she will not fail, when the opportunity offers, to turn it to good account.

The Government have slipped their old moorings in Ireland. They have abandoned their old friends, and their old principles, and they have found no new ones. They have given up the garrison ; but they have not won the Nationalists. They have created universal distrust. The landlords do not believe in them. The tenants do not believe in them. The Catholics do not believe in them. The Protestants do not believe in them. They are estranging the English interest without conciliating the Irish. Nevertheless, they are floundering into Home Rule without knowing it ; and before long they will find themselves brought face to face with the issue—a Crown colony or an

Irish Parliament. The grotesque farce of giving Ireland "Constitutional" government, and insisting on ruling the country in defiance of the declared wishes of three-fourths of the Parliamentary representatives of the people, must be brought to an end one way or the other. Apart from anything else, the Local Government Act, which has destroyed the power of the landlord oligarchy, and thrown the administration of counties and boroughs into the hands of the democracy, makes this inevitable.

His Majesty's Opposition is still rent by schism. It is the home of faction. Lord Rosebery is the genius of disorder and anarchy. He is a statesman of phrases; and his phrases will be the death of the Liberal party, if they are

not the death of himself. The "predominant partner" has been succeeded by "definite separation," and the last state of Lord Rosebery is worse than the first.

A speech made by Lord Rosebery in Glasgow in 1887 lies before me. I am tempted to take some extracts from it.

First he says :

"I am not one of those who underrate, as you know, questions of foreign or colonial or domestic policy, but there is only one question before the country now, and till that is settled there will be no other question disposed of. (Loud cheers.) No red herring, across whatever path it may be drawn, can distract the scent. No human being, I venture to say, can postpone the question. I saw it stated the other day that Mr. Gladstone

—(cheers)—if he would only postpone the Irish question for this Parliament, might reunite the Liberal party. I have seen that sentiment expressed more than once. Now, I am one of those few remaining people in Scotland—(laughter)—who cling to that effete prejudice which is soon to die out, which is called Gladstonian Liberalism. (Cheers.) Moreover, I am one of those who have an almost unlimited belief in Mr. Gladstone's capacity. (Cheers.) But Mr. Gladstone is human ; and even if he were more superhuman than he appears to be, it is not in Mr. Gladstone's power to postpone the Irish question."

I take another extract :

" I am told that it is reported in Scotland that Burns, if he had lived—(laughter)—would have been a Liberal

Unionist. (Great laughter.) Heaven save the mark! (Laughter.) I know that he wrote an 'Ode to the Tree of Liberty,' but I have re-read it in vain to discover any allusion to that particular section of our party. (Laughter.) I cannot speak confidently either as to Burns, because he died nearly a hundred years ago, and in a hundred years he might have changed his opinions very materially—(laughter)—but I can speak confidently of the policy of Charles James Fox, who boasted, not that he had given, as we wished to give, a Legislature to Ireland for the purposes of its domestic affairs, but boasted that he had given independence to Ireland, and boasted it as the creed of his party. (Hear, hear.) I can speak confidently of Mr. Burke, who rejoiced when he heard that

announcement of Mr. Fox with regard to independence, and said that it was the happiest day of his life. I can speak confidently of Lord Grey, the passer of the first Reform Bill, who, supported by Sheridan and Tierney, fought the Union Act inch by inch. I can speak confidently of Mr. Grattan, by appealing to every speech he ever delivered in his life. (Cheers.) Now, I want to know, gentlemen—Were these heretics and renegades as we are? Were they sharers of the same ignominy that we labour under? Why, are the dissident Liberals Whigs? Were these not Whigs? Are the dissentient Radicals Radicals? Were these not Radicals? And yet, gentlemen, precisely because we follow these great men—these apostolic fathers of the Liberal party—(cheers)—it is because

we follow them that Mr. Gladstone is gibbeted as a reckless old man, and we as a tail of dupes and fools who are idiotic enough to follow him." (Laughter.)

I shall take yet a third extract. He is speaking of Grattan's Parliament, and he says :

" But in 1782 the Irish seized the opportunity of England's weakness, an opportunity which, under those circumstances, you could hardly expect them to deny themselves. (Hear, hear.) They took the opportunity of England's weakness, and took what they wanted, which was a substantive Parliament. Now, I know it is a fashion to run down that Parliament, which is popularly known as Grattan's Parliament—a Parliament that lasted for eighteen years in Ireland. It had indeed many defects. It was a

purely Protestant Parliament, and therefore represented only a section of the population. It was largely controlled by Peers. It was to some extent corrupt. But it had two great merits. In the first place, it was what the Irish people wanted. (Cheers.) There is no principle, gentlemen, which seems so simple, but which seems somehow to need so much instilling into some of our greatest statesmen, as the fact that the potato that one knows and likes is better than the truffle that one neither knows nor likes. And, therefore, when you wish to give a benefit to a nation, it is better to give something that it likes and understands, rather than something that it neither likes nor understands. (Cheers.) The second merit of that Irish Parliament was this, that in the time of war it was

the staunch ally of the British Government—(cheers)—a staunch ally, and not a source of weakness.”

So much for Lord Rosebery in 1887. But at Liverpool the other day he uttered this sentence :—

“ If Ireland were loyal, I would gladly give her the privileges of the other self-governing colonies.”

“ If Ireland were loyal.” Why, in 1887, as we have just said, Lord Rosebery showed that Grattan’s Parliament was granted when Ireland was disloyal, and that Ireland became loyal afterwards. But that is not all. In the same speech, he referred to the disloyalty of the Irish in 1884, and to their alliance with Irish American revolutionists, and then he added : “ And my belief is that if you had accepted our propositions

last year—those propositions which in some form or another are so sure to become law —(cheers)—within a few years you would have found that the Irish resented interference as much from New York as they always have from London. (Cheers.)”

Now, I ask Lord Rosebery, were the Irish more loyal when he became a Home Ruler than they are now ?

Have Irish agitators of the present day made stronger declarations than Parnell made the very year of Lord Rosebery’s conversion ? Speaking at Cork in January, 1885, the Irish Leader said :—

“ We cannot ask for less than the restitution of Grattan’s Parliament with its important privileges and far-reaching constitution. We cannot, under the British constitution, ask for more than

the restitution of Grattan's Parliament. But no man has a right to fix the boundary of the march of a nation. No man has a right to say, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no further'; and we have never attempted to apply the *ne plus ultra* to the progress of Ireland's nationalhood, and we never shall." This speech was made in the beginning of 1885.

Before the end of 1885 Lord Rosebery had become a Home Ruler, and in the Glasgow speech of 1887 he gave expression to this sentiment: "This Irish demand for Home Rule, for a Parliament only recently stolen from them, sanctified by the authority of great names and affirmed by the voice of the nation, must be examined with a view to concession."

Let me further ask Lord Rosebery, is the state of Ireland more disturbed at the present moment than it was in 1884, the year before Lord Rosebery's conversion ? Let Lord Rosebery point to any period in Irish history when he considers that the Irish were loyal, and then let him say what great Act of justice was passed at that period. Why did Lord Rosebery become a Home Ruler in 1885 ? Did he then consider Irishmen capable of managing their own affairs ? Did he think that an Irish Parliament could be established without danger to the Empire ? If yes, then why does he not stand to his guns like a man ? If no, then what confidence can the people of England place in a statesman who asked them to surrender to the Irish in 1886 and 1893, and who now says that Irishmen are not

to be trusted ? Is Lord Rosebery to be trusted ? That, I fancy, is the question which many English electors will ask when Lord Rosebery, who was a Home Rule Prime Minister in 1894, asks to be returned to power as a Unionist Prime Minister in, say, 1904. Lord Rosebery seems to be shocked because I have used the words "legislative independence," but Mr. Gladstone, in introducing the Home Rule Bill in 1886, described the Parliament about to be created as "a practically independent body," and emphasised this description by repeating, "yes, practically independent in the regular exercise of its statutory functions."

Let us clear our minds of cant on this subject. Lord Rosebery says, that if Irishmen were loyal, he would give them

a colonial Parliament. Now I say to Lord Rosebery that if any British Minister will offer to the Irish people such a constitution as exists in the Colony of Victoria, the Irish people will take it, not because they feel it is the complete measure of justice to which Lord Rosebery himself showed that they were entitled, but because they are prepared now, as they were prepared in the days of Butt and Parnell, to accept a compromise ; and this I say, without minimising, in the least degree, Parnell's declaration that, "no man has a right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation." Our position is perfectly clear. We desire to have the management of our own affairs. These affairs have been grossly mismanaged by England, not only to the injury of Ireland, but to the

injury of England itself. For the management of our own affairs we demand an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive. No mere system of local government will satisfy the aspirations of the Irish people. They desire national government. "The sentiment of nationality," says Mr. Lecky (whose books have made many Home Rulers), "lies at the root of Irish discontent." That sentiment, which Englishmen insist on ignoring, must be gratified if Irishmen are ever to enter willingly into a commonwealth with England. As Mr. Gladstone said, Irishmen must have "practical independence" in the management of their own affairs. The Irish Executive must be responsible only to the Irish Parliament, as the Victorian Executive is responsible only to the Parliament of Victoria, and

the Irish Parliament must be left practically as unfettered in its acts as is the Victorian Parliament.

We all know that what Parliament gives Parliament can take away. But the true supremacy of the English Parliament does not rest merely on the law of constitution. It rests on the physical power of England—on the English Army and the English Navy, and on the great wealth and vast population of the English Empire. By the law of the constitution, England could not destroy Grattan's Parliament, and Grattan's Parliament could not destroy itself. Nevertheless it was destroyed, and English supremacy—not the supremacy of the law but the supremacy of force—prevailed. Let us approach this question as honest men and as business men. The partnership

between England and Ireland up to the present has been unsatisfactory to both parties. Despite the concessions of the past sixty years, the Irish are now more bent than ever upon securing the establishment of an Irish Parliament. The House of Commons accepted this principle in 1893, and in all the General Elections which have taken place since, the numbers of the Irish Nationalists have remained un-reduced. Whatever Lord Rosebery may think, or hope, he will never hold office, as a Liberal Prime Minister, except by Irish help. Let Lord Rosebery remember that it was in the power of Irishmen to turn out every Liberal Government (with a single exception) that held office since the first Reform Ministry; that is to say, the Irish Liberals and Nationalists between 1835

and 1895 (with the exception of the Ministry of 1880) could, by voting with the Tories on any given question, put an end to any Liberal Ministry, and the Irish possess that power now more fully than ever. Therefore, as a matter of expediency, Lord Rosebery will find it more to his interest to remain true to the principles which he professed in 1886 and 1893. As for the Tory leaders, they must know thoroughly well that Home Rule cannot be killed either by kindness or by harshness. Let them combine with the Liberals to end the present unsatisfactory situation. Let the principle of an Irish Parliament be accepted. Let the English Party Leaders, as Mr. Gladstone suggested long ago, try to close the Irish controversy by a scheme in which the national aspirations of the Irish people

will be no less considered than the interests of the English Commonwealth.

Hoping that your story of the "hundred years" will have a wide circulation,

I remain, my dear O'Brien,

Very truly yours,

J. E. REDMOND.

8th April, 1902.

A HUNDRED YEARS OF IRISH HISTORY.

It is not my intention to dwell upon the great event with which the century opened. I shall not re-tell the story of the Union. It is an old story, an unsavory story. But there are two points on which I must just touch at the outset.

First, in 1782, as you all know, the legislative independence of Ireland was established by the Irish Volunteers—by 60,000 men with arms in their hands.^{1*} England then promised that the right of the Irish Parliament to make laws for the Irish people should never again be “questioned or questionable.”² The exact

* The figures in the text refer to notes in the Appendix at the end of the volume.

words of the Act of Parliament ran : “ Be it enacted that the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by laws enacted by His Majesty and the Parliament of that Kingdom in all cases whatsoever, and to have all actions and suits of law and in equity, which may be instituted in that Kingdom, decided in His Majesty’s Courts therein finally and without any appeal thence, shall be, and is hereby declared to be, established and ascertained for ever, and shall at no time hereafter be questioned or questionable.” And yet, within eighteen years, England’s promise was broken ; the Act was violated ; and the Irish Parliament destroyed.

As England made promises in 1782, so she made promises in 1800. The path of English rule in Ireland is strewn with

promises—broken promises. In 1800 she said in effect to the Catholics : Support the Union, and you shall be immediately emancipated.³ She said to the Protestants : Support the Union and your Church shall be for ever upheld. Both promises were broken. Catholics and Protestants were alike deceived and betrayed.

The Catholics were betrayed on the instant. No attempt was even made to emancipate them. Faith was kept with the Protestants for sixty-nine years.⁴ Then they too were abandoned, and their Church was overthrown.

I shall pass over Emmet's insurrection ; for, if I may say so, it belongs, in a sense, rather to the eighteenth than to the nineteenth century. It was the last flicker of the fire of 1798. It was, as you know, quickly put out. But Emmet proved himself

worthy of his United Irish brethren. He died for the faith that was in him.

And now I come to my subject proper—the history of Ireland during her legislative union with England—“the union,” said Lord Byron, “of the shark with its prey.”

At the beginning of the century, the population of Ireland, roughly speaking, was about 5,000,000. Of these 5,000,000, 4,000,000 were Catholics, 600,000 were Protestant Episcopalians, and 400,000 were Presbyterians or members of other Protestant denominations, but mainly, in fact almost entirely, Presbyterians.

Let us consider the condition of this population, politically, religiously, socially, and economically.

First politically. Politically, all positions of power and emolument were in the

hands of the 600,000 Protestant Episcopalians. The 4,000,000 Catholics had no more to do with the government of the country than a community of mice might have to do with the government of the cats. By law they were excluded from Parliament, from the Judicial Bench, from the Viceroyalty, from the rank of King's Counsel, and from other important positions ; in practice, they were excluded from everything. I will explain. Under the influence of the Volunteer movement many of the penal laws had been repealed between 1778 and 1793. Thus, Catholics had been allowed to hold landed property, and to hear Mass, to keep schools ; and they were admitted to the Bar up to the rank of King's Counsel. Finally, in 1793, they were admitted to the elective franchise, to the Grand Jury,

to the Municipal Corporations, and to Dublin University.

Bear in mind that those things were done by an Irish Protestant Landlord Parliament ; and remember that, in the one year 1793, more was done by that Parliament for the Irish Catholics than was done for them by the English Parliament during the first quarter of the last century. Writing of these reforms, Mr. Lecky says : “ The time when the Irish Parliament was most persecuting, and the Irish Protestants were most fanatical, was the time when the first was absolutely subservient to foreign control, and when the latter considered themselves merely a garrison in an enemy’s country. No sooner had a national spirit arisen among the Protestants than the spirit of sectarianism declined.”

So it was ; the wave of nationality

which swept over the country between 1778 and 1793 broke down the barriers of intolerance and persecution. But though certain offices were thrown open, by law, to the Catholics, no Catholic appointments were, in fact, made ; and so it was that at the beginning of the century the Catholics had really no voice in the government of their country.

I pass to the question of religion. The Church of the 600,000 Protestant Episcopalians was established and endowed. It was the Church of the State. The Church of the 4,000,000 Catholics was supported by voluntary contributions. It was the Church of the people. It was ignored by the State. I shall say no more on this subject now. When I come to the Tithe War I shall have to return to it.

The story of Irish education is among

the most disgraceful chapters in the history of English dominion in Ireland. For centuries the education of the Protestant minority had been helped by the Government. The education of the Catholic majority had been proscribed or neglected. The Protestants had their schools and colleges; there were the Diocesan Free Schools of Elizabeth, the Royal Free Schools of James I and Charles I, the Erasmus Smith Schools, and, above all, the famous, or infamous Charter Schools—institutions which John Howard, the philanthropist, described as “a disgrace to Protestantism, a disgrace to all society”: yet, founded in 1733, they were supported by Parliamentary grants up to 1832. Then, of course, the Protestants had their University, Trinity College, while to this hour the Catholics

of Ireland have no University.* Catholic Ireland must not have a Catholic University, because it would offend the conscience of Protestant England.

I next pass to the economical condition of the people. In Ireland the great industry—almost the only industry—is the land. It is the trade of Ireland. How England destroyed the manufactures of Ireland, thus throwing the people wholly on the land, you know. The land, then, being the one vital industry, it is unnecessary for me to say how much the material well-being of the people depended upon the circumstances under which it was held—under which it was worked. As a result of English dominion, the land of Ireland was, in the main,

* It was not until 1908 that a University—the National University—acceptable to Catholics, was established by Mr. Birrell.

owned by Protestants ; it was, in the main, cultivated by Catholics. I do not want to say anything harsh of Irish landlords. It is not my wish to say anything harsh of any section of my fellow-countrymen. Some time ago the phrase—" the union of hearts "—was much in vogue. The " union of hearts " which I desire is a union of Irishmen of all classes and of all creeds, from the north to the south, from the east to the west ; landlords and tenants, Catholics and Protestants, Orange and Green ; and I look to this union as the surest way of bringing about the national regeneration of our country. I will only add, that the Irish landlords were, in no small degree, the victims of a bad system—a system which had been introduced by England, and upheld by English bayonets.

What was this system ? The landlords let the land—perhaps a strip of bog, barren, wild, dreary. The tenant reclaimed the bog ; built, fenced, drained, did all that had to be done.

“ In Ireland,” said Lord Donoughmore, “ landlords have been in the habit of letting land, not farms ”—a very happy description of the Irish landlord system. Well, the tenant converted the “ land ” into a “ farm.” “ It was the tenants,” said Mr. Nassau Senior, “ who made the barony of Ferney, which was originally worth £3,000 a year, worth £50,000 a year.” And what was the case in Ferney was the case in many another barony in Ireland.

When the tenant had done these things, had made the land tenantable, the rent was raised. He could not pay the increased rental—he had spent himself on

the land ; he needed time to recoup himself for his outlay and labour. He got no time : when he failed to pay he was evicted—flung on the roadside, to starve, to die. He took refuge in a Ribbon Lodge, told the story of his wrong, and prayed for vengeance on the man whom he called a tyrant and oppressor. Too often this prayer was heard, and vengeance was wreaked on the landlord or agent, and sometimes on both. That, in brief, is the dismal story of landlord and tenant in Ireland. Lest you may think that I am exaggerating, let me quote the words of an Englishman on the subject.

“ The treaty,” says Mr. Nassau Senior, “ between landlord and tenant in Ireland is not a calm bargain in which the tenant, having offered what he thinks the land worth, cares little whether his offer be

accepted or not ; it is a struggle, like the struggle to buy bread in a besieged town, or to buy water in an African caravan." Let me quote another Englishman : " In Ireland," says Lord Normanby, " the landlord has a monopoly of the means of existence, and has a power of enforcing his bargains which does not exist elsewhere—the power of starvation."

These are remarkable words, and give a graphic picture of the deplorable condition of things in Ireland down to a very recent date.

In this country you hear much of Irish outrages—of Irish agrarian outrages—but nothing of the causes of these outrages. Let me quote for you the words of an English member of Parliament on the subject. Mr. Poulet Scrope wrote to Sir Robert Peel, in 1844 :

“ But for a salutary dread of the Whiteboy Association, ejectments would desolate Ireland, and decimate her population. Yes! the Whiteboy system is the only check on the ejectment system; and weighing one against the other, horror against horror, and crime against crime, it is perhaps the lesser evil of the two.”⁵ But despite the “ Whiteboy system,” the “ ejectment system ” did “ desolate Ireland,” and “ decimate her population.”

“ Ireland,” says Mr. Bright, “ is a land of evictions—a word which, I suspect, is scarcely known in any other civilised country.” And again, “ Ireland is a country from which thousands have been driven by the will of the landlords and the power of the law.”

But Englishmen sometimes tell us that, after all, these things were done by

Irishmen—by Irish landlords. As soon as England had made up her mind to abandon the Irish landlords she did not spare them. But what says Mr. Bright on this question of the culpability of the Government or of the landlords? “If Ireland were a thousand miles away,” he says, “all would be changed; justice would be done, or the landlords would be exterminated by the vengeance of the people.” Just so; it was the Government of England that stood between the people of Ireland and justice. If the bayonets of England were not behind the landlords, they would have done justice to the people long ago.

I have said that the ejectment system decimated the people. “In Ireland,” says Mr. Gladstone, “there has been an enormous involuntary emigration.”

Between 1831 and 1864 3,097,415 people left Ireland for the United States of America. The press of England rejoiced over this exodus. Let me quote the *Saturday Review*, the organ of the cultured classes : " The Lion of St. Jarlath (John, Archbishop of Tuam) surveys with an envious eye the Irish exodus, and sighs over the departing demons of assassination and murder. So complete is the rush of departing marauders whose lives were profitably occupied in shooting Protestants from behind a hedge that silence reigns over the vast solitude of Ireland." These are the taunts to which we have been habitually subjected by the English press and by English politicians. " The complaints of the Irish," says Mr. Bright, " have been met—complaints of their sufferings have been met—often by

denial, often by contempt, often by insult." And yet John Bull—simple-minded, honest, bluff John Bull—is amazed because we do not love him. And what has been the history of these "marauders," of these "assassins," and "murderers," in other lands. Between 1831 and 1864 these "criminals" sent home from the United States alone, not less a sum than £13,000,000 sterling. "In every colony of the empire," says Joseph Kay, "and among the motley multitudes of the United States, the Irish are distinguished by their energy, their industry, and their success." But while Irishmen were successful in other lands, at home the masses of the people were almost constantly on the verge of pauperism.

I cannot detain you by quoting authorities—if I had the time I could quote

them in abundance—to prove this statement. One quotation, a famous quotation, I shall give, because it is representative. It is from Gustave de Beaumont's book on Ireland,* published in 1836, and I give it because, though the words were written in 1836, they might have been re-written in 1846, in 1856, in 1866, ay, and in 1876. Here is the quotation :

“ To see Ireland happy you must carefully select your point of view ; look for some narrow, isolated spot and shut your eyes to all objects that surround it, but wretched Ireland, on the contrary, bursts upon your view everywhere. I have seen the Indian in his forests and the negro in his chains, and thought, as I contemplated their miserable condition, that I saw the very extreme of human

* “ Ireland—Social, Political, and Religious.”

wretchedness ; but I did not then know the condition of unfortunate Ireland.”

I now come to the second part of my lecture—the history of the efforts which were made to reform the condition of things which I have described. First, I take the question of Catholic Emancipation. It is impossible for me to tell this story in detail. I shall have to pass over many points of interest, and even of importance, but the chief features of the story are these. In 1800, as I have said, the English Minister, Mr. Pitt, practically promised Emancipation. In 1805 the Catholics asked Mr. Pitt to present a petition to Parliament in support of their claims. He refused to have anything to do with it, or with them. Another great Englishman, however, Mr. Fox, did present the petition to the House of

Commons, but it was rejected with scorn. From that time forward the struggle went on. Irishmen, and even some Englishmen, appealed again and again to the reason and justice of the English nation ; but in vain. Grattan, Harry Parnell, Canning, Castlereagh, Plunket, were the foremost champions of the Catholic cause; but they spoke to deaf ears and hardened hearts. The state of the Catholic Question in England right up to 1828 may be gathered from the following quotations. In 1823 Sir William Freemantle, a member of the House of Commons, wrote to the Duke of Buckingham : “ As for our Catholic Question, it is gone to the Devil.”

Sir Spencer Walpole—one of the ablest and fairest of English historians—writing of the year 1824, says : “ The most hopeful politicians were beginning to despair

of effecting the emancipation of the Roman Catholics."

In 1825 the Duke of York said in the House of Lords: "I will resist the Catholic claims, whatever may be my situation in life. So help me God!"

And this royal blockhead represented the public opinion of England. His speech, we are told, was printed in letters of gold, and circulated throughout the country. Writing of the year 1827, Sir George Cornwall Lewis says:

"At this moment the breach between Great Britain and Ireland was wider than at any time since the Union; and the prospect of a tranquil settlement seemed more remote than ever. Ireland was becoming stubborn, insulting, and disaffected; Great Britain more intolerant, active, and oppressive."

The one great man who led the opposition of the English people to the Catholic claims was Sir R. Peel—the model English statesman of the nineteenth century. Let us see what were the reasons on which he founded his resistance to the Catholic demands. In 1827 he said in the House of Commons: “I cannot consent to widen the door to the Roman Catholics. I cannot consent to give them civil rights and privileges equal to those possessed by their Protestant fellow-countrymen.”

And pray why? What, think you, were the reasons which Sir Robert Peel gave for refusing to give the Catholics “equal rights” with their Protestant fellow-countrymen?

Because, he said, in effect—and the argument is extremely interesting, taken in connection with what is now going on

in another part of the world—because “there are 4,000,000 Catholics to 800,000 Protestants” (these were Peel’s figures), and, therefore, if “equal rights” be given to the Catholics, they will have a “preponderating” influence in the State.⁶ And what were these 4,000,000 Catholics whom Sir Robert Peel would not admit to “equal rights” with their Protestant fellow-countrymen? They were not the settlers of an hour; they were not financial mushrooms; they had not rushed into the country to work gold mines, and bolt with the profits; they were, on the contrary, the representatives of the old race, and the old religion—men whose fathers had owned the land before the shadow of an Anglo-Saxon had darkened it—yet, forsooth, they were not to have a voice in the government of

the nation lest they might exercise—a “preponderating” influence.

But what was happening in Ireland, while this fooling was going on in England? Daniel O’Connell had appeared on the scene. In 1823 he founded the Catholic Association. The people rushed into it. It spread all over the land. It became, in truth, a provisional government, more powerful than the Government of England.⁷ The country was drifting into rebellion.⁸ Not only was the whole civil population south of the Boyne disaffected, but the Catholic soldiers in the English army could not be trusted. “Three-fourths of the soldiers of Ireland,” said *The Times*, “are Catholics. Even the greater part of the Highland regiments belong to Ireland, and have been inoculated with

the feelings of those among whom they live."

So it was, the Irish soldiers could not be trusted. O'Connell himself tells us how, as he walked through the streets of Ennis in 1828—soldiers lining the way—a young sergeant stepped out of the ranks, and coming up to him, said: "I know that I have broken discipline, I know that I shall be punished, but I care not what may happen, I shall grasp the hand of the father of my country."

In Waterford the Irish soldiers flung their caps in the air, and cheered for O'Connell. "If we are asked to fire on the people," they said, "we know what we will do; there are two ways of firing: we can fire into the people, and we can fire over them. We know the way we will fire." In Limerick an Irish regiment

attacked an English regiment, and a fierce encounter ensued.

But perhaps I can give the best idea of the state of panic which prevailed, when I say that an "army" of not less than 5,500 men—horse, foot, and artillery—"occupied" Clare during the great election of 1828. The result of the election is well known. O'Connell stood in opposition to Peel's nominee ; and was elected by an overwhelming majority. Then the Government surrendered. In June, 1828, Peel had re-affirmed his determination never to surrender. In July the Clare election took place.⁹ In February, 1829, Peel introduced a Bill for the Emancipation of the Catholics—for their admission to Parliament, and to all civil and military offices, except the posts of Regent, of Lord Chancellor, and of Irish Viceroy.

The reasons which the English Minister gave for this change of front are highly interesting. "In the course of the last six months," he said, "England, being at peace with the whole world, has had five-sixths of the infantry force of the United Kingdom occupied in maintaining the peace and in police duties in Ireland. I consider the state of things which requires such an application of military force much worse than open rebellion. If this be the state of things at present, let me implore of you to consider what would be the condition of England in the event of war. Can we forget in reviewing the state of Ireland what happened in 1782?" A more remarkable reason for doing a bare act of justice has rarely been given. It comes to this, that Peel, in effect, tells the Irish people that the

best way to get justice from England is to bring about such a condition of things as will result in locking up the military forces of England in Ireland, and so paralysing English operations in the event of war in other parts of the world.

But I am not done with Emancipation yet. When O'Connell was elected for Clare, Peel's first thought was, apparently—not to yield—but to devise some means by which it would be impossible in the future for any Catholic to become even a candidate for a Parliamentary election. He seems to have proposed to the Cabinet that a law should be passed obliging the candidates to take, before the election, the oaths which the successful candidate was obliged to take after election, prior to his admission to Parliament. By such means, he argued,

the repetition of what happened in Clare would be avoided. But the Cabinet would not accept the proposal, owing to the "public inconvenience which would be caused by keeping Parliament sitting until the point was disposed of."¹⁰ The injustice, the meanness, of the proposal seems never to have occurred to this enlightened English statesman. But worse things remain to be told about this "concession" of Catholic Emancipation.

O'Connell had been elected by the 40s. freeholders. "I have polled all the gentry, and all the £50 householders—the gentry to a man," wrote O'Connell's opponent. But the 40s. freeholders rallied to the agitator. These freeholders had been allowed to exercise the franchise so long as they had voted at the bidding of the landlords. But at the Clare election,

under the influence of O'Connell, they revolted. They defied the landlords and flung themselves upon the side of their country. For this act they were punished. They were disfranchised on the instant.¹¹

One more point. The Catholic Relief Act was so framed that O'Connell was obliged to go back to Clare and seek re-election. This is the story of Catholic Emancipation ; and I venture to say that a meaner story, a more disgraceful story, has seldom been told.

“What you refuse,” said Henry Grattan, “refuse decently ; what you give, give graciously.” Emancipation was neither refused decently, nor given graciously.

I next turn to the subject of education. In 1831 the National Schools were

established. The Irish people—Catholic and Protestant—wanted a system of denominational education, but the English people would not tolerate such a system. Ireland was to get not what Ireland wanted, but what England wished ; and a system of mixed education was founded. A Board was formed to control the system. This Board consisted of four Protestants and two Catholics, in a country where Catholics were to Protestants as four to one. That was not all. The real management of the system was placed in the hands of two men—an English Protestant Episcopalian and a Scotch Presbyterian—Archbishop Whately and Mr. Carlile. Both set themselves to work to anglicise the youth of the country. The books were prepared with this view, and some extracts from them are worth giving.

In one of the books we find this statement about Ireland : “ On the east of Ireland is England, where the Queen lives ; many people who live in Ireland were born in England, and we speak the same language, and are called the same nation.”

Let us see how, in another book, Scotland was dealt with : “ Edward the First annexed the Principality of Wales to his kingdom, A.D. 1283. He afterwards attempted to do the same with Scotland, but was successfully resisted, particularly by Sir William Wallace. This celebrated patriot drove his troops out of the kingdom. He was ultimately taken and basely executed by Edward, and a new effort projected to subdue the Scots. But before the army of Edward entered Scotland he died, leaving his crown and

enterprise to his son, Edward II. This prince followed up the intention of his father, but was defeated at Bannockburn, and thus the independence of the Scots was established."

It was allowable for Irish youths to speak of Sir William Wallace as a "celebrated patriot," to think with pride on the struggle of the Scots for independence ; but it would have been treason to mention the names of Art McMurrough or Hugh O'Neil, to tell how Sarsfield fought or Emmet died. Lines on the "Irish Harp," by Miss Balfour, Campbell's poem, "The Harper," and Scott's lines, "Breathes there a man" were suppressed by Archbishop Whately. But His Grace inserted the following hymn instead:

" I thank the goodness and the grace
That on my birth have smiled,
And made me in these Christian days
A happy English child."

I must say, as a matter of bare justice, that the government of the English in Ireland has not been all tragedy : it has sometimes been grotesque farce. Well, the national schools of Ireland have, in defiance of the Government and by the will of the people, been converted into denominational institutions, and such they are to-day. A History of Ireland—Mr. Joyce's admirable little book—is now used, but, I believe, only as a "reading book." The children, as I understand, are not taught history out of it*—an absurd, but a very characteristic limitation. England has never known how to do the right thing, in the right way, and at the right time.

In 1832 the first Irish Reform Bill

* So I was told in a school I visited in 1900. I believe they now use (1911) other history books, by popular writers, which have been admitted since this lecture was delivered.

was passed. Like so many measures of Irish "Reform" it was a sham. "Restore the Forty Shilling Freeholders," said O'Connell, in effect, "if you mean to give a full and fair parliamentary franchise to Ireland." But the Government would do nothing of the kind. "You have a Forty Shilling Freehold franchise in England," said the Irish leader. "We had a Forty Shilling Freehold franchise in Ireland up to 1829, when you took it away. Restore it, assimilate the English and Irish franchises, and we will accept your Bill." But the Government would not yield. The opinion of Irishmen about Ireland was not worth having. "The common notion," said Lord Campbell, "prevailing among Liberals in England is that Ireland is wholly incapable of law and liberty, and must be governed

by the sword." It would have been more honest to govern her by the "sword" than to deceive the people by fraudulent "concessions." The Irish Reform Act of 1832 starved the Irish representation, so much so, that, in 1850, Mr. Bright said that "the representation of Ireland was virtually extinguished."¹²

It was not until 1884 that the English and Irish franchises were assimilated—that the Irish people got a fair chance of making their voices heard with effect at Parliamentary elections.

And now we come to the year 1833. What was the condition of Ireland then? Let Mr. Lecky answer. "In 1833—four years after Emancipation—there was not in Ireland a single Catholic judge or stipendiary magistrate. All the high

sheriffs, the overwhelming majority of the unpaid magistrates and of the grand-jurors, the five inspectors-general, and the thirty-two sub-inspectors of the police, were Protestants. The chief towns were in the hands of narrow, corrupt, and for the most part intensely bigoted corporations. For many years promotion had been steadily withheld from those who advocated Catholic Emancipation, and the majority of the people thus found their bitterest enemies in the foremost places."

I pass to the Tithe War. In 1830-35, the population of Ireland was 7,943,940 ; of this number there were 6,427,712 Catholics, 852,064 Protestant Episcopalians, and 642,356 Presbyterians. The revenues of the State Church—the Church of the 800,000 Protestant Episcopalians—were made up in this way ;

Church lands, endowments, Church cess, tithes.¹³ The Church cess was a rate levied for the repairs of the churches. A committee was appointed to strike this rate. On the committee there was not a single Catholic, while almost all the ratepayers were Catholics. Here is a precious example for you of that vital English principle ; “ no taxation without representation.” The vast majority of tithe-payers were, of course, Catholics. Thus, the unfortunate Irish peasant, in addition to supporting the religion in which he believed, was obliged to pay rents to “ absentee ” landlords, and tithes to the ministers of an “ alien ” Church.¹⁴

I remember once hearing a story of an inn in England which displayed a sign showing the figures of a parson, a soldier,

and a farmer ; underneath was the scroll : the parson said, “ I pray for all ” ; the soldier said, “ I fight for all ” ; and the farmer said, “ I pay for all.” The unfortunate Irish peasant paid for all.

And what was this peasant ? The poorest of the poor. “ What are the generality of the tithe-payers ? ” Dean Blakeley, the Protestant Dean of Achonry, was asked before a committee of the House of Commons in 1832. He answered, “ They are generally very poor ; so poor that they cannot in some districts provide places of worship for themselves.”

“ On an Irish Sabbath morning,” said the just and generous Sydney Smith, “ the bell of a neat parish church summons to worship only the parson, and an occasionally conforming clerk ; while,

two hundred yards off, a thousand Catholics are huddled together in a miserable hovel, and pelted by all the storms of heaven."

But perhaps the best notion which you can get of the extraordinary position of the English Church in Ireland may be gathered from a passage in the *Greville Memoirs*, which I shall read. "Lord Duncannon," says Mr. Greville, "talked much of the Irish Church, and of the abominations that had been going on even under his own eyes. One case he mentioned, of a man whom he knows, who holds a living of £1,000 a year close to Bessborough. There is no house, no church, and there are no Protestants in the parish. He went there to be inducted and dined with Duncannon at Bessborough the day after. Duncannon

asked him how he had managed the necessary form, and he said he had been obliged to borrow the clerk and three Protestants from a neighbouring parish, and had read the morning and evening service to them within the ruined walls of an old abbey, and signed a certificate that he had complied with the forms prescribed by law."

I might produce much evidence to prove the scandalous position of the English State Church in Ireland, but the above extract will suffice.¹³ Well, in 1830 the Irish peasant declared war against the Tithe system. Dr. Doyle sounded the tocsin in a famous sentence: "Let your hatred of tithes," he said, "be as great as your love of justice."

The first encounter of the campaign was at Graigue-na-Managh. In the parish

of Graigue there were 5,000 Catholics and—63 Protestants. The parson demanded tithes of the priest, the priest refused to pay. The parson seized his horse, and then the whole parish struck against tithes. A little army was poured into the district to seize the cattle of the peasants. There was a force of 350 police, supported by a troop of dragoons, and a detachment of the 1st Fusiliers—making in all 600 men. Well, these men stopped in the parish for two months ; but the peasants by a series of clever strategical movements kept the cattle out of sight all the time, so that at the end of the two months the “English army” marched away without having captured so much as a pig. At Newtown Barry there was an encounter between peasants and yeomanry. The peasants tried to prevent

the sale of cattle seized for tithes. The yeomanry were called out and ordered to fire on the people. Twelve peasants were killed and twenty wounded.

At Thurles there was another encounter between peasants and police, when more peasants were shot down.

And then came the "battle" of Carrickshock. The peasants met the police hand to hand, and foot to foot. There was a fierce fight which lasted for over an hour. The chief of the police was killed. The leader of the peasants—an old '98 man—was killed. But the police force was completely routed, leaving many of their men dead upon the field. Before the fight at Carrickshock, O'Connell begged of the Government to stay the collection of tithes. "You have," he said, "appointed a committee to inquire

into the whole subject. Stay your hand until the committee reports." "No," said the Government, "the law must be maintained." But within four-and-twenty hours after the "disaster" of Carrickshock, orders were sent throughout the land to stop the collection of tithes everywhere. How true is the statement of John Bright: "Nothing has been done for Ireland unless under the influence of terror."

At Doon, in the county of Limerick—where the population was: Catholics 5,000, Protestants 1—the parson demanded tithes of the priest; the priest refused to pay. His cow was seized and put up for sale. Never, I venture to say, was a cow put up for sale under such extraordinary circumstances. There was upon the field—keeping the ground

as the saying is—a strong police force, a troop of 12th Lancers, five companies of the 92nd Highlanders, and two pieces of artillery ; and the cream of the joke is that the cow was not sold after all.

At the same place some time afterwards thirteen cows were put up for sale. The cows were escorted to the scene of action by the 5th Foot and the 92nd Highlanders. But not one of the thirteen was sold.

At Wallstown there was an encounter between peasants and police and soldiers. The police were supported by the 92nd Highlanders and the 14th Foot, all under the command of three magistrates, two generals, and one admiral ; the wonder is that the Naval Brigade was not on the spot, too. The peasants stoutly resisted the efforts of the authorities to value their crops. A hand to hand

fight ensued ; and the peasants were not dispersed until the 14th Foot fired upon them, killing four and wounding many. It is only just to the officer in charge of the 14th Foot—Lieutenant Grierson—to say that he refused again and again to fire until overborne by his superiors.

At Rathkeeran soon afterwards there was another “battle.” The peasants were led by a young girl, Catherine Foley. They came into collision with the police ; the police fired, then Catherine Foley put herself at the head of her people and shouted, “Now at them, boys, before they have time to load again,” and the peasants flung themselves upon their foes. There was a fierce and deadly fight, the police charging with the bayonet and the peasants meeting the assault with pitchfork, stick and slane. The fight was still

raging when the 70th Regiment arrived upon the field and fired into the peasants, killing twelve and wounding many. Among the slain was Catherine Foley, shot full in the face.

Other encounters continued to take place until at length came the fight at Rathcormac in 1834. At Rathcormac a widow—a Catholic, of course—owed 40s. tithe, and the parson came to collect the money, escorted by the 29th Regiment and the 4th Royal Irish Dragoons. Once more the peasants made a gallant stand. “I never,” said one of the English officers present, “saw such determined bravery as was shown by the people on that day.” While it was a question of hand to hand fighting, the peasants held their ground; but, being without fire-arms, they had to yield to powder and

ball. The soldiers fired upon them, with the result that there were over fifty casualties, killed or wounded.

That in brief—for I have not told the half of it—is the story—the infamous story—of the Tithe War. “The moment,” says Sydney Smith, “the very name of Ireland is mentioned, the English seem to bid adieu to common feeling, to common prudence, and to common sense, and to act with the barbarity of tyrants, and fatuity of idiots.”

It is sometimes said : “If Catholics were oppressed in Ireland, Catholics were oppressed in England, too.” Yes, but the cases are very different. “In England,” said O’Connell, “the Catholics are a sect, in Ireland they are a nation.”

Mr. Bright has dealt with the point, too. “But,” he says, “some others say that

there is no ground of complaint because the laws and institutions of Ireland are, in the main, the same as the laws and institutions of England and Scotland. They say, for example, that, if there be an Established Church in Ireland, there is one in England and one in Scotland, and that Nonconformists are very numerous both in England and Scotland ; but they seem to forget this, that the Church in England, or the Church in Scotland, is not in any sense a foreign Church." In these sentences Mr. Bright has gone to the root of the whole matter. We all know that Protestants have been persecuted in Catholic countries and that Catholics have been persecuted in Protestant countries. But the Irish case stands outside all other cases in this remarkable way. In all other cases you

have had a comparatively insignificant minority oppressed by an overwhelming majority—I do not justify the fact, I simply state it—but Ireland is, I believe, the only country in Europe where you have had an overwhelming majority—the whole nation, as O’Connell said—oppressed by an insignificant minority. And why do we find this unparalleled state of things ? Simply because behind the minority in Ireland is the immense power of a foreign Empire. That is the bottom fact all the time in the Irish case, —the rule of the “foreigner.” “I do not believe,” says Mr. Chamberlain so late as the year 1885, “that the great majority of Englishmen have the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule the sister country. It is a system which is founded

on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralised and bureaucratic as that with which Russia governs Poland, or as that which prevailed in Venice under the Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step—he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal, or educational work without being confronted with, interfered with, controlled by, an English official, appointed by a foreign Government.”

I pass on.

It is generally supposed that the Tithe War came to an end in 1838, when the Tithe Commutation Act was passed. This is not so. The Tithe War was stopped, in 1835, by one of the noblest men that ever lived, Thomas Drummond. Drummond

stands apart from all the English rulers of Ireland. He knew the country, he loved the people, he felt the cause of the nation. When he came to Ireland in 1835 he found the soil drenched with blood. Yes, England has made rivers of blood in Ireland which still flow between the two nations. Drummond practically struck down the hand of the "foreigner." It is only a man moved by the strongest sense of justice, and possessing a will of iron, that could do the things he did. He said in effect to the Church: "Yes, the law says you shall have your tithes. Take them. The law does not say that I am to collect them for you. Take your tithes, have your pound of flesh. But if you shed one drop of Catholic blood you shall answer to me." Drummond refused to send a single policeman or soldier to

collect tithes ; and as the tithes could not be collected without such aid, they were scarcely collected at all. Finally, in 1838, the Tithe Commutation Act was passed. It was a sham. “[By this Act,]” says Mr. Joyce in his admirable *Concise History of Ireland*, “the tithes were put on the landlord instead of the tenant. But the tenant had to pay still, for the landlord added the tithes to the rent.”

The Government of Lord Melbourne, kept in office by O’Connell and inspired by Drummond, tried to rule justly. O’Connell made an alliance with them. He said in effect, “I will suspend the demand for the Repeal of the Union while you are in office in order to see if it is possible for any English Ministry to do justice to the Irish people.”

The Melbourne Government did its

best. It was certainly kept in office by the Irish vote ; nevertheless, I believe that Lord Melbourne and his colleagues were sincerely anxious to do justice to Ireland for justice's sake. But the Government was a deplorable failure. Its measures were wrecked by the House of Lords, and the " predominant partner " backed the House of Lords. Let me mention one of the remedial measures of the Melbourne Ministry. In 1840 the municipal corporations of Ireland were reformed. At that time there were sixty-eight of those bodies in existence. How were they reformed, do you think ? Fifty-eight out of the sixty-eight were destroyed and a restricted franchise was given to the remaining ten. No wonder that even an English historian—Sir Erskine May—should have described this

measure as “virtually a scheme of municipal disfranchisement.” Sir Boyle Roche once said, in the Irish House of Commons, that he was prepared to “destroy the whole of the constitution to preserve the remainder.” Well, the Melbourne Government destroyed almost the whole of the Irish municipal corporations to preserve the remainder.

On the fall of the Government, in 1841, and the accession of Peel to office, O’Connell once more unfurled the banner of Repeal.

“I have tried an experiment,” he said, “I suspended the demand for Repeal to see if it was possible even for a friendly English Government to do justice to Ireland. It is not possible. The only remedy is Repeal of the Union.” I cannot go into the details of this great movement ;

it would take a lecture to itself. I may say, however, in the words of Sir Gavan Duffy, that O'Connell's case rested on two main propositions :

1. "Ireland was fit for legislative independence in position, population, and natural advantages. Five independent Kingdoms in Europe possessed less territory or people ; and her station in the Atlantic, between the old world and the new, designed her to be the *entrepôt* of both, if the watchful jealousy of England had not rendered her natural advantages nugatory.

2. "She was entitled to legislative independence ; the Parliament of Ireland was as ancient as the Parliament of England, and had not derived its existence from any Charter of the British Crown, but sprang out of the natural

rights of freemen. Its independence, long claimed, was finally recognised and confirmed by solemn compact between the two nations in 1782; that compact has since been shamefully violated, indeed, but no statute of limitation ran against the rights of a nation.”*

The Repeal movement was, of course, thoroughly constitutional. “Give us back,” said O’Connell, “the Parliament of which you robbed us forty years ago, and we will close the account.” “There is nothing so safe,” said John Bright, “as public meetings.” The Repeal movement was a movement of public meetings. Everything was done in the light of open day. And yet how was O’Connell treated for making a demand, mark you, practically the same

* *Young Ireland.*

as that made by Mr. Gladstone in our own day ? He was indicted for seditious conspiracy. It looks like a joke that O'Connell, who did all things in the open, should have been indicted for conspiracy. It is, however, a grave fact. And how was he tried ? O'Connell's trial was the scandal of the age. "The most eminent Catholic in the Empire," says Sir Gavan Duffy, "a man whose name was familiar to every Catholic in the world, was placed upon his trial in the Catholic metropolis of a Catholic country before four judges and twelve jurors, among whom there was not a single Catholic." Of course, O'Connell was found guilty and sent to jail.

But the infamy of the trial was too much even for the English House of Lords. The conviction was quashed, the

trial was practically condemned as “a mockery, a delusion and a snare,” and O’Connell was set free. But the Repeal movement was put down by brute force.

Out of the Repeal movement sprang the Young Ireland movement. I cannot go into the history of that movement either. I refer you again to Sir Gavan Duffy’s books, *Young Ireland*, *Four Years of Irish History*, *The Life of Thomas Davis*. The “Young Irelanders” began as constitutional agitators. Their demand, like O’Connell’s, was simply for the restoration of the Irish Parliament. But they gradually drifted into revolution and the rising of 1848 was the result.

But before ’48 came, the work of the Young Irelanders was done. In their famous organ—*The Nation*—they revived the memory and the teachings of Wolfe

Tone ; and the seed they sowed blossomed into fruit in the Fenian organisation. Young Ireland was the child of Repeal ; Fenianism was the child of Young Ireland.

The rising of '48 was, as you know, quickly put down ; but the spirit of the nation—though a terrible famine had swept over the land, decimating the people—remained unsubdued. I will not linger over the ghastly story of this famine, nor of the incapacity shown by the Government in dealing with it, nor of the horrible evictions by which it was followed. I will only say, that three years after the famine the population of Ireland, which three years before the famine was over eight millions, sank to six millions and a half.

In 1850, an agitation for the reform

of the Land Laws was set on foot by Gavan Duffy, Frederick Lucas, George Henry Moore. Enough has never been made of the criminality of the English Parliament in neglecting all appeals to amend the Irish Land Laws. The very life of the country depended on a good system of Land Laws ; and yet successive Governments turned a deaf ear to all appeals and remonstrances in behalf of the people.

In 1843, a Royal Commission—the Devon Commission—had been appointed to inquire into the whole subject. In 1845 the Commission reported, condemning the existing system, and urging the legislature to take steps for giving the tenant security of tenure. But nothing was done. Between 1845 and 1870 Bill after Bill was introduced for the purpose

of giving effect to the recommendations of the Devon Commission, and of regulating the relations between landlord and tenant in such a way as would secure the proper cultivation of the soil, and so save the people from chronic poverty, and the country from chronic outrage. But not one single measure of reform took its place on the Statute book. Nay, more, in 1860 a Bill was passed, which, ignoring the recommendation of the Devon Commission, made the position of the unfortunate tenant worse than it had been before ;¹⁵ and Lord Palmerston thought that he had disposed of the Irish Land Question for all time by the flippant remark, "that tenant right was landlord wrong." But while English ministers were sitting with folded arms, viewing the people of Ireland with contempt, and

scornfully rejecting the moderate appeals of constitutional agitators, a great Irish movement was going on underground. In 1858, the Fenian organisation—an organisation which aimed at the separation of Ireland from England—was founded by James Stephens and John O'Mahony. It grew rapidly in Ireland and in America. As Mr. Gladstone said, its root was in Ireland, its branches were in the United States.

In 1865, Fenianism burst like a bolt from the blue. Fenian leaders were arrested, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, troops were poured into the country, ships were sent to guard the coast, the Government were thrown into a state of alarm and panic. Let me give you the substance of a speech made by John Francis Maguire in the House of

Commons in 1868 to show that I do not exaggerate.

Mr. Maguire, in moving a resolution on the state of Ireland, said the country presented the aspect of a nation on the eve of a great struggle. It was occupied by a powerful army "such as we might expect to see in Poland under Russian rule." Its cities and towns were strongly garrisoned, its barracks were filled to overflowing, and the detachments of horse and foot were quartered in districts where the face of a soldier had never been seen before. Even the police barracks had been converted into "semi-fortresses," with "stanchions, iron shutters, iron doors, and loop-holed masonry." Formidable fleets lay in the principal harbours, gun boats were to be found in the rivers and remote creeks, and swift

cruisers kept watch and ward round the coast. The jails were filled with political prisoners, and "constitutional liberty was on a par with that enjoyed by the subjects of the Emperor of Morocco, or the King of Abyssinia."

Well, the result of this state of things was that public attention in England, came at length to be riveted on Ireland, and the English State Church was dis-established, and the Land Act of 1870 passed. I say deliberately, that Ireland owes these two measures to the Fenian organisation, and I shall prove the statement up to the hilt.

First, if I may say so, I will give negative proof. When Mr. Gladstone introduced his famous Church resolution, in 1868, 100 out of 105 Irish members took part in the division. Well, how many do

you think voted for the resolution ? Fifty-five ; and forty-five voted against.¹⁶

Well, I need not tell you that the English public would not care three rows of pins for an Irish majority of ten. This is what I call negative proof. I shall now give you positive proof.¹⁷ I shall call distinguished authorities. First and foremost I shall take Mr. Gladstone himself. Here is what he said : “ It has only been since the termination of the American war, and the appearance of Fenianism that the mind of this country has been greatly turned to the consideration of Irish affairs.”

Again in the House of Commons in April, 1868, in reply to Mr. Hardy, Mr. Gladstone said : “ The right hon. gentleman says, ‘ Why did you not deal with the Irish Church in 1866, when you

asked for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act ? ' My answer is, for a perfectly plain and simple reason. In the first place, circumstances were not ripe then as they are now. Circumstances, I repeat, were not ripe, in so far as we did not then know so much as we know now with respect to the intensity of Fenianism."

I now take a more remarkable statement still. In 1879, exactly ten years after the event, when Mr. Gladstone had abundant time for reflection and consideration, he used these words, addressing a meeting at Dalkeith :—" What happened in the case of the Irish Church ? That down to the year 1865, and the dissolution of that year, the whole question of the Irish Church was dead ; nobody cared about it, nobody paid attention to

it in England. Circumstances occurred which drew the attention of the people to the Irish Church. I said myself, in 1865, and I believed, that it was out of the range of practical politics. When it came to this—that a great jail in the heart of the metropolis was broken open under circumstances which drew the attention of the English people to the state of Ireland, and when in Manchester [a policeman] was murdered in the execution of his duty, at once the whole country became alive to Irish questions, and the question of the Irish Church revived. It came within the range of practical politics.”*

But it is sometimes said, “That was only Mr. Gladstone.” Other authorities, however, may be cited. I shall quote Lord Dufferin.

* These occurrences were occasioned by attempts to release Fenian prisoners.

“I entirely agree,” says Lord Dufferin, “with the noble Earl [Granville], and with the late Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, [Lord Kimberley], that the attention of this country and the conscience of England with respect to this question [the Church] were much stimulated, if not altogether awakened, by the fact of Fenianism.”

I will quote Lord Derby. Writing in the *Nineteenth Century*, in 1881, he says : “A few desperate men, applauded by the whole body of the Irish people for their daring, showed England what Irish feeling really was, made plain to us the depth of a discontent whose existence we had scarcely suspected, and the rest followed of course.”¹⁸

No wonder that Lord John Russell, surveying the whole history of Ireland,

should have said : “ Your oppressions have taught the Irish to hate, your concessions to brave you. You have exhibited to them how scanty was the stream of your bounty, and how full the tribute of your fear.”

Well, the Land Act of 1870, which purported to secure to the tenant, on eviction, compensation for his improvements, and in certain cases for disturbance, was a failure. Before the Act was passed, Mr. Gladstone said that “ notices to quit fell like snow-flakes ” on the tenants. After the Act was passed “ notices to quit ‘ continued ’ to fall like snow-flakes ” still.

The measure failed utterly—as many Irish members warned the Government it would fail—in its main purpose, *viz.*, to prevent arbitrary evictions and the exaction of exorbitant rents. A fresh appeal

was made to Parliament to take up the unfinished work and carry it through successfully to the end. But Parliament treated these appeals with characteristic contempt. Between 1870 and 1880 Bill after Bill was introduced by moderate constitutional agitators, for the purpose of giving the tenant the fixity of tenure which the Act of 1870 had failed to secure. But all these Bills were ignominiously rejected.

Irishmen were regarded as the most unreasonable and unaccountable beings in the world, because they again approached Parliament for further measures of redress. Then Charles Stewart Parnell and the Land League came. I do not want to say much about the Land League agitation. I am rather getting on to dangerous ground. But I will say

this, a more lawless, a more violent, organisation has scarcely ever existed in any country. And I will supplement that statement by another. If it had not been violent and lawless it would not have succeeded. An Irishman once said that the only chance you had of making an impression on an English minister, where Ireland was concerned, was by coming to him with the head of a landlord in one hand, or the tail of a cow in the other. That was how the Land League came, and the Land League triumphed. In 1881 the Government surrendered at discretion, and another Land Act was carried amidst scenes of lawlessness, violence, anarchy, outrage, panic and alarm scarcely paralleled in the troubled history of Ireland. This measure — a great

revolutionary measure—undermined the power of the landlords. It set up courts to fix rents, to stand between landlord and tenant, and see that justice was done. It also facilitated the purchase of their farms by tenants, and, altogether, marked a departure in the social and economical history of the country, favourable, in the highest degree, to the interests of the cultivators of the soil.

I have said that there would have been no Land Act had there been no Land League. I will once more cite unquestionable authorities in support of my statement.

“I must make one admission,” said Mr. Gladstone, “and that is that without the Land League the Act of 1881 would not at this moment be on the Statute book.”

“Fixity of tenure,” said Lord Derby,

“has been the direct result of two causes—Irish outrage and Parliamentary obstruction. The Irish know it as well as we. Not all the influence and eloquence of Mr. Gladstone would have prevailed on the English House of Commons to do what has been done in the matter of Irish tenant right, if the answer to all objections had not been ready: ‘How else are we to govern Ireland?’”

It is said by our most impartial judges and rulers that we Irish are an “unreasonable people.” We were forsooth “unreasonable” when we demanded Catholic Emancipation, Educational Reform, Tithe Reform, Church Reform, and above all Land Reform. Yet our “unreasonable” demands have been granted under the pressure of our “unreasonable” methods; and lives there an Englishman

who will now condemn as “unreasonable” a single one of the measures which have been placed on the Statute book by the energy and perseverance of Irishmen ?*

I must pass quickly over the remaining subjects.

In 1870 the Home Rule movement—a movement for the establishment of an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive for the management of Irish affairs, reserving to the Imperial Parliament the control of Imperial affairs—was founded by Isaac Butt. In Ireland, the movement grew rapidly ; in England, slowly. At the General Election of 1874, Ireland sent fifty-nine Home Rulers to the English Parliament. Butt did not, at this time, demand Home Rule point blank

* Another Land Act was passed in 1885, and another in 1887, and others subsequently. The impetus given to Land Reform by the Land League movement has never been checked.

from the English Minister ; he asked only for an inquiry, but the Minister would not grant an inquiry. Butt framed a "pledge" which every candidate for an English constituency was bound to take before obtaining the Irish vote. This "pledge" ran : "To vote for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into and report upon the motive, extent, and grounds of the demand made by a large proportion of the Irish people for the restoration to Ireland of an Irish Parliament with power to control the internal affairs of the country." Between 1874 and 1877 there were only eight English Home Rulers in Parliament.* In April, 1877, there was an

* Mr. Barran (Leeds), Mr. Jacob Bright (Manchester), Mr. Greenley (Sunderland), Mr. Hibbert (Oldham), Sir Wilfrid Lawson (Carlisle), Mr. Macdonald (Stafford), Mr. R. N. Philips (Bury), Mr. Cowen (Newcastle). With the exception of Carlisle, the Irish were a power in all these constituencies.

election at Salford. The story of the Salford election is little known ; it ought to be well known, for it throws a curious light on the progress of Home Rule in England. Mr. Joseph Kay, Q.C., a Liberal of wide sympathies, possessing a knowledge of Ireland, and holding advanced views on the question of Land Reform, stood for Salford, and agreed to take the "pledge." He was not a Home Ruler. But he said in effect : "Let us, at least, inquire into the subject ; let us hear the Irish case ; let us find out what are the grievances of Ireland, and try, if we can, to remove them without granting Home Rule." Kay was an honest man, and wished to know the truth of the situation. But the Liberal wire-pullers thought only of winning the seat—without the "pledge" if possible,

but with it if necessary. The following extracts from letters written at the time by influential Liberals are interesting and instructive. Thus, one Liberal writes from the House of Commons : “ I have had a conversation this evening about the Home Rulers. It is most essential that the promise to vote for Mr. Butt’s motion [the ‘ pledge ’] should be given cheerfully [by Mr. Kay], and at once, as both Mr. Butt and Lord Francis Conyngham assure me that such a promise will secure the cordial and thorough support of the Irish voters, and, without such promise, whatever else is said, many will abstain, and may possibly, under Bishop Vaughan’s influence, go to the other side.” Another Liberal wrote : “ I have had a long talk with S—— and J—— to-day. They are both against

any promise to the Irish faction, but I feel a promise will be necessary *if we are to win.*" Ultimately S—— and J—— agreed that it was "necessary" for Mr. Kay to make the "promise" in order to "win." J—— wrote: "I understand that the Irish vote is so large, that it would be necessary for the Liberal candidate to support Mr. Butt's motion for an inquiry on the subject of Home Rule. Of course, I do not know Mr. Kay's views, but I have no doubt that this difficulty can be overcome." Later on another Liberal wrote disposing of the whole difficulty in the following masterly fashion: "I think Mr. Kay should go in for the inquiry into Home Rule. I got that up with Mr. Butt at the Manchester election, and the Tory, Mr. Powell, swallowed it. If it will get the Catholic

vote I think Mr. Kay should swallow it, too. It means nothing, and I got it up with Mr. Butt for that very reason." There is a Machiavellian touch about this epistle which is magnificent. Mr. Kay carried out his original intention of promising to vote for Butt's motion. But he lost the election. Then the Liberals were scandalised, and ascribed his defeat to "Home Rule crotchets," practically making him, who had played the game honestly, responsible. "London and other newspapers at a distance," wrote a Salford supporter of Mr. Kay, "may attribute the defeat to the concession to Home Rule. . . . How is it that this burning zeal for putting down Home Rule crotchets on the part of the Liberal newspapers did not manifest itself when a Liberal Home Ruler was

elected for Manchester ? Verily, nothing succeeds like success." And so it was ; the question of Home Rule in England was a question of expediency pure and simple. But soon events began to move rapidly.

In 1875 Charles Stewart Parnell had entered Parliament. In 1879 he was a power in the country. He combined all the disaffected in Ireland, and all the Irish revolutionists in America in one solid compact "army of rebellion." It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that his very name soon became a "terror" in the councils of English statesmen. At the General Election of 1880 Ireland returned sixty Home Rulers against forty-four Unionists. Between 1880 and 1885 a storm of revolution broke over the land. Parnell defied the Government,

and roused the people to furious resistance to the law. The Habeas Corpus Act was practically suspended. Irish Nationalists were flung into jail. Dynamite plots, and rumours of dynamite plots, filled the air. There was an epidemic of outrages. The Irish Parliamentary Party were, in the words of the English Minister, practically "steeped to the lips in treason." It was in these circumstances that a sweeping measure of Land Reform was granted in 1881, and Household Suffrage extended to Ireland in 1884.

In 1885, there was another General Election. Eighty-six Irish Home Rulers were returned. Several seats were captured in Ulster. Donegal returned four Home Rulers, Cavan two, Monaghan two, Fermanagh two, Londonderry one, Tyrone

three, Armagh one, Down one. The stronghold of the "English garrison" had been stormed, and citadel after citadel fell at the assaults of the Nationalists.

The upshot of the election in the three kingdoms, and in the principality of Wales, was that the Irish held the balance between English parties.* No government could be formed without Irish aid. Then Mr. Gladstone became a Home Ruler, and he carried the bulk of the Liberal Party into the Home Rule ranks with him. Parnell had outmanœuvred the Liberal leader, and the Tory leader, apparently, only escaped by the skin of his teeth.† In 1886 Mr. Gladstone, then Prime Minister of England,

* Liberals, 335 ; Tories, 249 ; Irish Home Rulers, 86.

† Lord Carnarvon, the Tory Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, had approached Parnell before the adhesion of the Liberal Party.—See *Life of Parnell*.

introduced a Home Rule Bill—a Bill for the establishment of an Irish Parliament and Executive—but it was defeated by a combination of Tories and dissentient Liberals, and the Government was overthrown. I care not to dwell upon the circumstances under which Mr. Gladstone became a Home Ruler. But I do wish to remind you of the splendid fight which he made for Ireland between 1886 and 1893. Few Irishmen ever threw themselves into the Irish cause with more earnestness, more energy, and more determination to stand or fall by that cause, than did this magnificent old man during the closing years of his remarkable life. Let that fact never be forgotten.

In 1892 Mr. Gladstone was once more Prime Minister of England. In 1893 he introduced another Home Rule Bill, and

carried it through the House of Commons by the Irish vote. But it was defeated in the Lords and abandoned. In 1894 Mr. Gladstone retired from public life, and Home Rule, so far as England was concerned, disappeared, for the moment, with him. But the end is not yet.

I shall not go into the story of the fall of Parnell, and of all that has happened since. I have, indeed, perhaps brought this lecture far too much up to date as it is. And yet I am tempted to mention, and only to mention, one more "concession" before I sit down—the Local Government Act of 1898—a great revolutionary measure which has annihilated the power of the "English garrison" in Ireland, and thrown the local administration of the country into the hands of the people.¹⁹

And now I must close this lecture. I will leave it to you to sum up the gains and losses of the century. Gains—substantial gains—there unquestionably have been. Political disabilities have been almost entirely swept away, religious inequalities have been almost entirely removed ; the condition of the cultivators of the soil has been greatly improved ; and Parliamentary franchises have been granted, which, I will not say enable the Irish people to make their voices heard in the English Parliament, for I don't know that that would do much good, but which enable Irishmen to make themselves troublesome in the English House of Commons, and that may do very much good.

Against these gains there are losses to be set, or, perhaps, I ought rather to say,

there is one great loss to be set ; the decline—the terrible decline—in the population of the country. In 1848 the population of Ireland was 8,000,000. In 1889 it was 4,700,000 ; this is altogether a phenomenal condition of things. I do not know that there is anything like it in the history of Europe during the last hundred years. And while our population has been going down, our taxes have been going up. I state, upon the authority of Mr. Gladstone, that while the “ civil charges ” in Great Britain, with a population of more than 30,000,000, are 8s. per head, the “ civil charges ” in Ireland, with a population of 4,700,000, are 16s., exactly double. The disappearance of the Irish people from Ireland has been a subject of joy to the English press. “ In a short time,” once wrote *The Times*,

“a Catholic Celt will be as rare on the banks of the Shannon as a Red Indian on the shores of Manhattan.”

Well, Catholic Celts are yet to be seen on the banks of the Shannon, and for that matter on the banks of the Thames, too; and if the Irish Celt has replaced the Red Indian on the shores of Manhattan, England has not been a gainer by the change. This emigration from Ireland has not been all loss. Every man who leaves Ireland is not lost to Ireland.

Irishmen are no doubt scattered all over the world. I know not how many millions of Irish there are in the United States. Well, wherever those men are they do not forget Ireland. During the struggles of the past twenty or thirty years the Irish in America have helped

the Irish at home financially and politically, and it is in no small measure owing to their help that the efforts of Ireland have been so often crowned with success. I had a conversation with a local politician in Belfast last autumn. He was a Nationalist and a Catholic ; though perhaps a Catholic first. We talked about the Boer war, which had just broken out. I asked him what side he was on, "Well," he said, "I think I am on the side of England. After all, we are too rough on the English. We denounce them too much. They have done some good." "What good?" said I. "Well," said he, "they have scattered the Irish people all over the world, and wherever the Irish go they carry the Catholic religion with them. So that, after all, I think England is doing

the work of God though she doesn't know it."

Well, that is a view—an original view—and I give it. I had also a conversation with a distinguished English statesman. We talked about Home Rule. He summed up the argument by saying with much cheerfulness: "Well, one thing will settle the question, your population won't last. It is decreasing, and it will continue to decrease"; and he smiled benevolently all over the room.

He, too, found consolation in the fact that the Irish were going with a vengeance. Well, he may be doomed to disappointment. Some day, perhaps, the Irish may come back with a vengeance. I, at all events, do not take a gloomy view of the future. I have faith in my race. I believe that the qualities which have

preserved the Irish Celt, under oppressions and persecutions scarcely paralleled in the history of any other civilised country, will preserve him to the end.²⁰

APPENDIX

NOTE I.

(See page 61.)

1. “ [In 1778] the Mayor of Belfast called upon the Government to place a garrison in that town to protect it against the French, and was informed that half a troop of dismounted cavalry and half a troop of invalids were all that could be spared to defend the commercial capital of Ireland. Then arose one of those movements of enthusiasm that occur two or three times in the history of a nation. The cry to arms passed through the land, and was speedily responded to by all parties, and by all creeds. Beginning among the Protestants of the north, the movement soon spread, though in a less degree, to other parts of the island, and the war of religions and of castes that had so long divided the people, vanished as a dream, the inertness produced by centuries of oppression was speedily forgotten, and replaced by the consciousness of recovered strength. From Howth to Connemara, from the Giant’s Causeway to Cape Clear, the spirit of enthusiasm had passed, and the creation of an army had begun. The military authorities who could not defend the country could not refuse to arm those who had arisen to supply their place. Though the population of Ireland was little more than half of

what it is at present [1871], 60,000 men soon assembled, disciplined and appointed as a regular army, fired by the strongest enthusiasm, and moving as a single man."—Lecky, *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland*, pp. 79-80.

NOTE II.

(See page 61.)

2. "The Government at length yielded. The Duke of Portland was sent over as Lord-Lieutenant, with permission to concede the required boon. At the last moment an effort was made to procure a delay, but Grattan refused to grant it; and on the 16th of April, 1782, amid an outburst of almost unparalleled enthusiasm, the declaration of independence was brought forward. On that day a large body of the Volunteers were drawn up in front of the old Parliament House of Ireland. Far as the eye could stretch the morning sun glanced upon their weapons and upon their flags; and it was through their parted ranks that Grattan passed to move the emancipation of his country. . . . Doubtless on that day many minds reverted to the long night of oppression and crime through which Ireland had struggled towards that conception which had been as the pillar of fire on her path. But now at last the promised land seemed reached. The blessings of independence were reconciled with the blessings of connection; and in an emancipated Parliament the patriot saw the guarantee of the future prosperity of his country, and the Shekinah of liberty in the land."—*Ibid.*, pp. 112, 113.

NOTE III.

(See page 63.)

3. " We have seen that it had been the first wish of Pitt and Dundas in England and of Cornwallis in Ireland to make Catholic emancipation a part of the Union ; and when this cause was found to be impracticable, there is good reason to believe that Canning recommended Pitt to drop the Union until a period arrived when it would be possible to carry the two measures concurrently. Wiser advice was probably never given, but it was not followed, and a Protestant Union was carried, with an understanding that when it was accomplished the Ministry would introduce the measure of Catholic emancipation into an Imperial Parliament. It was this persuasion or understanding that secured the neutrality and acquiescence of the greater part of the Irish Catholics, without which, in the opinion of the best judges, the Union could never have been carried."—Lecky, *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. v, pp. 428, 429.

" I cannot leave [the Catholics] as I found them. I have raised no unauthorised expectations, and I have acted throughout with the sanction of the Cabinet."—Lord Cornwallis, *Cornwallis Correspondence*, vol. iii, p. 238.

NOTE IV.

(See page 63.)

4. The 5th Article of the Act of Union provided :
" That the Churches of England and Ireland as

now by law established be united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, to be called the United Church of England and Ireland ; and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the said United Church shall be, and shall remain in full force for ever, as the same are now by law established for the Church of England, and the continuance and preservation of the said United Church, as the Established Church of England and Ireland, shall be deemed, and taken to be an essential and fundamental part of the Union."

NOTE V.

(See page 74.)

5. Poulet Scrope, M.P., wrote to Sir R. Peel in 1844 :

" Though God gave the land of Ireland to the people of Ireland—to the many—the law has given it unconditionally to the few. Even in the best of times, if the landlord refuses to any peasant the holding of a plot of land, if other starving wretches outbid his offer for the patch of soil whose possession is as necessary to his existence as the air he breathes—if sickness or misfortune prevent his punctual payment of the enormous rent he has promised, and he and his family are ejected (by the cheap and summary process which landlord-made law provides) from his cabin which sheltered him from his birth and his fathers before him—what remains ? He must die ! The law, at least, says so. The law allows him no other alternative. He may contrive to prolong a precarious existence

on the charity of his poor neighbours (as he asks in vain from the rich), or he may take by force or stealth what is necessary to preserve life. But the law does not recognise these means of living ; on the contrary, the law forbids them. The law says, if he cannot rent land or obtain work, he shall starve. This is the real wrong—this is the giant grievance—this is the most crying, the most urgent of the just complaints of the Irish people. And it is against this state of the law that they combine in their Whiteboy associations—associations that will never be put down until the law extends that protection to the lives of the poor, which it now lavishes exclusively on the property of the rich. And who will say that the peasantry ought not in the state of the law to combine for their mutual protection ? Is there no point of oppression at which resistance to the law becomes a duty ? We have the recent authority of the head of the law for the principle—a principle as old as it is true—that allegiance is only due where protection is afforded ; and where the law refuses its protection it cannot claim allegiance. Does the law, then, protect the Irish peasant ? Not from starvation. It does not protect him from being thrust out of his home and little holding into absolute destitution, to perish on the highways of famine, or to waste away in those abodes of filth, misery, and disease in the suburbs of the towns, which Dr. Doyle so faithfully describes as the ordinary refuge and dying place of the ejected cottier and his family. It does not preserve him from being visited by this fate at the command

of an absentee landlord, who may desire to clear his property of some of the human incumbrances whom God has brought into being upon it.

“The law affords the Irish peasant no protection from so horrible a fate. Hundreds are at present exposed to it. Millions know they are liable to it. Can the law justly require their allegiance? Can we expect them willingly to pay it? No. The peasantry of Ireland feel that the law places their lives at the mercy of the few, whom it invests with sovereign power over the land of their native country, with power to sweep them at will off its surface. They feel that the continuance of the system of clearing estates, which has been for so many years in progress, is a question of life and death to them. And therefore do they combine against it? Therefore it is—however little minds may wonder at the fact—that they show no more repugnance to the shedding of blood in open day, in the presence of assenting thousands, in the execution of the sentences of self-organised tribunals, looked upon by them as the sole safeguard of their lives, than does a soldier hired to fight for his country’s safety on the field of battle. It is to their own Whiteboy law that their allegiance is considered due.

“They look alone to the secret tribunals, to their own establishment, for the protection which the law of the Imperial Parliament denies them, and they obtain it! Let those who know Ireland deny the fact if they can. The peasantry of Ireland do more or less obtain from the Whiteboy association that essential protection to their

existence which the established law of the country refuses to afford. The Whiteboy system is the practical and efficient check upon the ejectment system. It cannot be denied that but for the salutary terror inspired by the Whiteboys, the clearance of estates would proceed with a rapidity and to an extent that must occasion the most horrible sufferings to hundreds of thousands of the ejected tenantry. Some landlords have bowels of compassion, and might hesitate so to employ the fearful power with which the law has unconditionally armed them for the improvement of their property. Many, the majority perhaps, would not be stayed by such scruples. It is easy to satisfy the mind of an interested party that what the law allows to be done cannot be wrong—that what appears necessary for the preservation of property must be right. May they not do as they will with their own? Yes. But for the salutary dread of the Whiteboy associations ejectments would desolate Ireland and decimate her population, casting forth thousands of families like noxious weeds rooted out of the soil on which they have hitherto grown, perhaps too luxuriantly, and flung away to perish on the roadsides. Yes, the Whiteboy system is the only check on the ejectment system, and, weighing one against the other—horror against horror and crime against crime—it is perhaps the lesser evil of the two—a necessary evil in the present state of the law in Ireland—a mitigation of the otherwise intolerable slavery, which the law of the land enforces, of the Irish peasant to the Irish landlord. The Whiteboy

system will never be put down until the Legislature establishes a law for the end it aims at—that, namely, of protecting the lives of the Irish peasantry and securing to them the means of living by their industry.”

“ That the difference between England and Ireland in regard to the carelessness of human life arises not so much from the nature of the people as from the difference of the circumstances in which they are placed, appears from the fact that when in England the opinion of a large body has been in favour of atrocious crime, atrocious crimes have been committed. Of this the outrages perpetrated by the trade unions afford a sufficient proof. The murder of Mr. Ashton, in Cheshire, by two men, who were hired by the trade union, and received ten pounds for killing him, is equal in atrocity to almost any Irish murder ; and the rick burnings in the South and East of England show how far a system of deliberate crime will spread when there is a real grievance to justify it.”—Sir George Cornewall Lewis, *Irish Disturbances*, pp. 301, 302.

“ The first thing that ever called my attention to the state of Ireland was the reading an account of one of these outrages. I thought of it for a moment, but the truth struck me at once, and all I have seen since confirms it. When the law refuses its duty, when Government denies the right of the people, when competition is so fierce for the little land which the monopolists grant to

cultivation in Ireland, when, in fact, millions are scrambling for the potato—these people are driven back from the law, and from the usages of civilisation, to that which is termed the law of nature, and if not of the strongest, the laws of the vindictive ; and in this case the people of Ireland believe, to my certain knowledge, that it is only by these acts of vengeance periodically committed that they can hold in suspense the arm of the proprietor, of the landlord, and the agent, who, in too many cases, would, if he dared, exterminate them. Don't let us disguise it from ourselves, there is a war between landlord and tenant—a war as fierce and relentless as though it was carried on by force of arms.”—John Bright quoted in Kay's *Social Condition of the European People*.

“ A gallant general, Sir Hussey Vivian, has expressed his amazement at the indifference to crime and the insensibility of conscience to the guilt of murder which he regards as a characteristic of the disturbances prevailing in Ireland. This peculiar and abominable characteristic he confesses himself incapable to understand or explain. It has, however, an explanation, and but one. The atrocities committed in these disturbances are not, as they have been called, ‘ driftless and desultory ’ ; they are incidents in a systematic war—a war which is wasting the country by slow combustion : or they are the punishments inflicted by competent and acknowledged authority. Conscience is no more concerned in them than in the case of a public execution, or in the crowning charge at

Waterloo. What to the uninstructed seem assassinations or perjuries, are to the organised peasantry in Ireland no more than successful ambuscades and military stratagems."—Rev. Mortimer O'Sullivan (a Protestant clergyman), of Trinity College, Dublin.

NOTE VI.

(See page 83.)

6. Extracts from Sir Robert Peel's speeches or letters on the Catholic question between 1812 and 1829 :

1812.

"Will they tell us where we are to stop? Will they assure us that they will not ask to be admitted to power without those oaths which are deemed necessary to bind every other class of subjects? It is true that we are told we have already given Catholics the reality of power in the elective franchise; and that, having given the reality, it is foolish to refuse the semblance. But to this I say, that it never was foreseen by the parties who framed those measures that such an argument could have been raised upon them; or that, instead of Catholics being satisfied with those boons for their own value, they should consider them only as the grounds for further claims and more extended pretensions."

1813.

"I protest against the principle of this Bill, because it confers upon those who admit an external jurisdiction the right of legislating in all

matters connected with the Church of England. . . . If the Protestants exceeded the Roman Catholics in number I should have much less objection. But it is impossible to consider that the Catholics so greatly preponderate, without feeling alarm at the consequences of such unlimited concession. We cannot close our eyes to the fact that differences of religion have existed in Ireland for a protracted period, and that this is an experiment to try whether those religions cannot be placed on the same footing. . . . How can we hope, under such circumstances, when it is admitted that there are 4,000,000 of Catholics to 800,000 Protestants, to maintain the Protestant ascendancy. This is a point which, I think, we ought well to consider."

1817.

" You tell us that the Roman Catholics of Ireland are advancing in wealth and education, and that as you remove the disabilities under which they labour, their advance will be more rapid, and they will become more influential in the State. Do you then mean, *bona fide*, to give them in Ireland the practical advantages of the eligibility you propose to confer on them? Do you mean to give them that fair proportion of political power to which their numbers, wealth, talents, and education will entitle them? If you do, can you believe that they will, or can, remain contented with the limits which you assign to them? "

1823.

" By what right are imputations of such a nature

cast upon me? With what variation from principle can I at any time be charged? From the earliest period of my political life—caring nothing for the opinion of my friends, caring nothing for the opinion of the people—I have uniformly and undeviatingly opposed the concessions to the Catholics. . . . For my own part, I protest that I would rather submit to eternal exclusion from office (and perhaps I should consider that no very great sacrifice) than to consent to hold power by the compromise, or anything approaching to the compromise, of an opinion.”

1825.

“ I am afraid of a powerful internal party in this country, of whom great numbers are dissatisfied, as they must be, with our principles of religion ; and I can never think that they can be fit to enact laws respecting the established faith. My belief is, that after they have obtained the privileges which they seek, they will not cease in their endeavours, but will struggle for the pre-eminence of their religion.”

1827.

“ I have felt that I have no choice but to state with firmness, though I trust without asperity, the principles which my reason dictates, and which my honour and conscience compel me to maintain. The influence of some great names have lately been lost to the cause which I support ; but I have never adopted my opinions either from deference to high station, or that which may more fairly be

expected to impress me—high ability. Keen as the feelings of regret must be with which the loss of those associates in feeling is recollected, it is still a matter of consolation to me that I have now an opportunity of showing my adherence to those tenets which I formerly espoused—of showing that if my opinions are unpopular, I stand by them still, when the influence and authority that may have given them currency is gone; and when it is impossible, I believe, that in the mind of any human being I can stand suspected of pursuing my principles with any view to favour or personal aggrandisement.

“I cannot consent to widen the door of political power to Roman Catholics. I cannot consent to give them civil rights and privileges equal to those possessed by their Protestant countrymen; because, after taking the most deliberate view I am able to take of the relation which the Roman Catholics bear to the rest of the community, I am persuaded that the removal of their disabilities would be attended by a danger to the Protestant religion against which it would be impossible to find any security equal to that of our present Protestant Constitution.”

1828 (June).

“As the hon. baronet (Sir F. Burdett) has expressed a hope that the present administration will take up this question next session, and introduce some measure for its settlement; lest any misconception should go abroad respecting my sentiments, I am anxious to say a word upon this point for

myself, and for myself alone. Under the constitution of the present Government, each individual member of it is at liberty to entertain and support his own opinions regarding this question. Conceiving, then, that it is only necessary for me to state my own individual opinion on the subject, I refer the hon. baronet and the House to the declarations which I have repeatedly made respecting it, when, speaking as an individual member of the Government, as I am at liberty to do, I have explained my own sentiments on the question. To that declaration and to those opinions I still adhere, and I conceive that, in saying so, I have said enough to satisfy the House that my sentiments upon the question remain unaltered."

So spoke the Tory Minister in June, 1828. In February, 1829, he introduced a Bill for the emancipation of the Catholics. He justified this change of front in a remarkable letter to the Protestant Bishop of Limerick :

1829 (February).

" In the course of the last six months, England, being at peace with the whole world, has had five-sixths of the infantry force of the United Kingdom occupied in maintaining the peace and in police duties in Ireland. I consider the state of things which requires such an application of military force much worse than open rebellion.

" There has been established an intimate union between the Roman Catholic laity and the Roman Catholic priesthood ; in consequence of that union the representation of the counties of Waterford,

Monaghan, Clare and Louth has been wrested from the hands of the natural aristocracy of those counties ; and if the present state of things is to continue, if parties in Parliament are to remain so nicely balanced that each can paralyse the other, that one can prevent concession, the other can prevent restraint and control, we must make up our minds to see sixty or seventy Radicals sent from Ireland when a general election shall take place.

“ The state of society in Ireland will soon become perfectly incompatible with trial by jury in any political cases. The Roman Catholics have discovered their strength in respect to the elective franchise. Let us beware that we do not teach them how easy it will be to paralyse the Government and the law unless we are prepared to substitute some other system of criminal jurisprudence for the present system.

“ If this be the state of things at present, let me implore you to consider what would be the condition of England in the event of war.

“ Would an English Parliament tolerate for one moment a state of things in Ireland which would compel the appropriation of half her military force to protect, or rather to control, that exposed part of the Empire ?

“ Can we forget, in reviewing the history of Ireland, what happened in 1782, what happened in 1793 ? It is easy to blame the concessions that were then made ; but they were not made without an intimate conviction of their absolute necessity in order to prevent greater dangers.

“ My firm impression is that unless an united Government takes the whole condition of Ireland into its consideration, and attempts to settle the Catholic question, we must be prepared for the necessity of settling it at some future period in a manner neither safe to Protestant establishments, nor consistent with the dignity of the Crown of England.”

NOTE VII.

(See page 84.)

7. “ The avowed objects of the great Catholic Association were to promote religious education, to ascertain the numerical strength of the different religions, and to answer the charges against the Roman Catholics embodied in the hostile petitions. It also *recommended* petitions (unconnected with the Society) from every parish, and aggregate meetings in every country. The real object was to form a gigantic system of organisation ramifying over the entire country, and directed in every parish by the priests for the purpose of petitioning and in every other way agitating in favour of emancipation. The Catholic Rent was instituted at this time, and it formed at once a powerful instrument of cohesion, and a faithful barometer of the popular feeling. . . . Very soon the importance of the new Society became manifest. Almost the whole priesthood of Ireland were actively engaged in its service, and it threatened to overawe every other authority in the land.”—*Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland*, pp. 236, 237.

Canning described the Catholic Association thus :

“ Self-elected, self-constituted, self-assembled, self-adjourned, acknowledging no superior, tolerating no equal, interfering in all stages with the administration of justice, levying contributions, and discharging all the functions of regular government, it obtained a complete mastery and control over the masses of the Irish people.”—Canning in the House of Commons in 1825.

NOTE VIII.

(*See page 84.*)

8. “ If you glance at the history of Ireland during the last ten years, you will find that agitation really means something short of rebellion ; that, and no other, is the exact meaning of the word. It is to place the country in that state in which its government is utterly impracticable, except by means of an overawing military force.”—The Duke of Wellington, in the House of Lords in May, 1829.

NOTE IX.

(*See page 86.*)

9. “ On the accession of the Wellington Ministry to power the Catholic Association passed a resolution to the effect that they would oppose with their whole energy any Irish member who consented to accept office under it. . . Mr. Fitzgerald, the member for Clare, accepted the office of President

of the Board of Trade, and was consequently obliged to go to his constituents for re-election. . . O'Connell adopted the bold resolution [of opposing him]. The excitement at this announcement rose at once to fever heat. It extended over every part of Ireland and penetrated every class of society. The whole mass of the Roman Catholics prepared to support him, and the vast system of organisation which he had framed acted effectually in every direction. . . After two or three days' polling the victory was decided, and Mr. Fitzgerald withdrew from the contest."—Lecky, *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland*, pp. 243, 247.

"Ireland was now on the verge of revolution. The whole masses of the people had been organised like a regular army, and taught to act with the most perfect unanimity. Adopting a suggestion of Sheil, they were accustomed to assemble in every part of the country on the same day, and scarcely an adult Catholic abstained from the movement. In 1828 it was computed that in a single day two thousand meetings were held. In the same year Lord Anglesey [the Lord-Lieutenant] had written to Sir Robert Peel, stating that the priests were working most effectually on the Catholics of the army, that it was reported that many of these were ill-disposed, and that it was important to remove the dépôts of recruits and supply their place by English or Scotch men. The contagion of the movement had thoroughly infected the whole population. If concession had not been made, almost every Catholic county

would have followed the example of Clare ; and the Ministers, feeling further resistance to be hopeless, brought in the Emancipation Bill, confessedly because to withhold it would be to kindle a rebellion that would extend over the length and breadth of the land."—*Ibid.*, pp. 247, 248.

NOTE X.

(See page 89.)

10. " We had some conversation—I mean in the Cabinet—on the questions arising out of Mr. O'Connell's return. The return is not objectionable in point of form, and it has been notified in the *Gazette*. I apprehend it to be quite clear that Mr. O'Connell cannot possibly take his seat as a member of Parliament. He will have no opportunity of making any harangue. If he appears, the Speaker will desire him to take the oaths desired by law, and if he declines to take them, will treat him as a stranger and intruder, and listen to nothing that he has to say. . . . But I apprehend the refusal to take the oaths would not disqualify him from again presenting himself to the electors of Clare, nor would it invalidate a second return by the Sheriff. The effectual remedy against such a return would be to pass a law enabling the same oaths that are to be taken at the table of the House to be tendered to a candidate previously to the election, and thus to disqualify the man who cannot be a member of Parliament from being a candidate. There is nothing unreasonable in this ; but our impression, after the discussion in Cabinet of

yesterday, was that more public inconvenience would arise from keeping Parliament sitting until the case of Mr. O'Connell could be finally and effectually disposed of, than from adhering, for the present, at least, to the ordinary course pursued in respect to the return of a member of Parliament."—Sir Robert Peel to Lord Anglesey, July 13, 1828, *Peel's Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 143, 144.

NOTE XI.

(See page 90.)

11. "The forty-shilling freeholders were first elected for electioneering purposes. As long as they allowed themselves to be driven to the hustings like sheep to the shambles without a will of their own all was well ; not a murmur was heard. But the moment these poor people found out the value of their tenure, the moment they exercised their power constitutionally, that instant they are swept out of political existence."—Lord Anglesey, quoted by Sir Spencer Walpole in his *History of England*.

NOTE XII.

(See page 96.)

12. The franchises proposed by O'Connell were :

40s. freeholders.

£5 freeholders.

£10 freeholders.

Those carried by Ministers were :

£10 freeholders.

£20 leaseholders.

£10 leaseholders.

“ This measure [the Irish Reform Bill] was the least successful of the three great Reform Acts of 1832. Complaints were immediately made of the restricted franchises which it had created ; and the number of electors registered proved much less than had been anticipated.” — May, *Constitutional History of England*.

“ The House well remembered that by the Reform Act a ten pounds franchise was conferred on Ireland, and the general opinion at the time of passing the measure was that under that franchise a very extensive constituency would be created in Ireland. This expectation has entirely failed.” — Sir William Somerville (Irish Secretary), in the House of Commons in 1844.

“ Your lordships are not aware of the extent of the inequality which prevails between the franchise in Ireland and England. If you take the population of Great Britain, including Wales, in round numbers at 18,000,000, and the population of Ireland in round numbers at 8,000,000, you will find the proportion of the population between the two countries as $2\frac{1}{4}$ to 1. But the number of electors in England is 820,000, while the number of electors in Ireland is only 100,000. There is, therefore, a proportion of $8\frac{1}{2}$ electors to 1 between the two countries, with a population of $2\frac{1}{4}$ to 1.” — The Marquess of Normanby, in the House of Lords in 1844.

NOTE XIII.

(See page 98.)

13. "The mere existence of this Church proves that there is in human institutions a degree of selfishness and folly to which it is impossible to ascribe a limit."—Gustave de Beaumont, *Ireland*, vol. ii, p. 201.

"The Irish Establishment is an anomaly unparalleled in the Christian Universe."—Archdeacon Glover, answer to a letter of Dean Pellew, May 16, 1833.

"This Church is in Ireland the Church of the stranger, the badge of conquest, the personification of centuries of tyranny."—John Lemoine, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, July, 1843.

NOTE XIV.

(See page 98.)

14. "I want to see a public man come forward and say what the Irish question is. One says it is a physical question; another a spiritual. Now it is the absence of aristocracy; then the absence of railways. It is the Pope one day, and potatoes the next. A dense population in extreme distress inhabit an island where there is an Established Church which is not their Church; and a territorial aristocracy, the richest of whom live in a distant capital. Thus they have a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church."—Disraeli in the House of Commons, February 13, 1844.

NOTE XV.

(See page 122.)

15. "The object and intended effect of this Act [1860] was to substitute in the relation of landlord and tenant, for the just and equitable principles of common law, or custom, the hard commercial principle of contract, and to render any right of the tenant, either as to duration of tenancy or compensation, dependent on express or implied contract."—Finlason, *Land Tenure*.

"The Devon Commission had reported, that the tenant by reason of the tenure between him and his landlord was entitled to compensation for all improvements honestly made. . . . [But] if the Act of 1860 had been successful it would have destroyed any claim of the tenant for future improvements, unless in accordance with some contract express or implied. The Act, however, proved nugatory."—*Ibid.*

NOTE XVI.

(See page 126.)

16. In the division on Mr. Gladstone's motion for a Committee of the whole House to consider the Acts relating to the Established Church in Ireland, the Irish members voted thus :

FOR.		AGAINST.	
Leinster	. . . 23	Leinster	. . . 12
Munster	. . . 22	Munster	. . . 1
Connaught	. . . 10	Connaught	. . . 3
Ulster	. . . 0	Ulster	. . . 29
	<hr/> 55		<hr/> 45

In 1843, Mr. Ward, in the House of Commons, moved an address to the Crown, declaring "that the laws which regulate the present distribution of Church property in Ireland are not conformable to reason, or to the practice of any Christian country." The Irish Secretary (Lord Elliot) opposed the motion, saying that the "compact entered into at the Union" should be kept; adding that he could see no difference between "the existence of a Protestant Establishment and a Protestant Sovereign," and that as long as the latter "must profess one of the two creeds," the "two religious persuasions could not be placed on a footing of perfect equality." The House was counted out.

In 1844 Mr. Ward moved for a Committee of the whole House to consider "the present state of the temporalities of the Church of Ireland." Lord Elliot again opposed the motion, saying that, "any attempt to alienate any portion of the revenues of the Church, and to apply it to other than Church purposes, would be unjust and inexpedient." Sir James Graham said: "For my part, I can only repeat that the attempt—I will not say to subvert the Church, for that might be disallowed—but to take a large portion of its revenues either for Roman Catholic endowments, or for secular purposes, is forbidden by justice, forbidden by the compact entered into by the united Parliament, and forbidden by the sanction of the highest moral obligations." Mr. Ward's motion was defeated by 274 against 179 votes.

In 1846 Sir James Graham declared that he was "opposed to any policy destructive [of the Church],

and Lord John Russell said that he "had never held the opinion that the Irish Church ought to be destroyed, though it needed reform." In 1847 the Ministers of the day once more declared that they had no intention of legislating on the subject.

In 1849 a motion for a Committee to inquire into the Establishment was rejected by 170 to 103 votes.

In 1854 a proposal to suspend 395 benefices where the Church population was very small was opposed by the Government as "wholly uncalled for," and rejected by 117 to 31 votes.

In 1865 a debate on a motion, "that in the opinion of this House the present position of the Irish Church Establishment is unsatisfactory, and calls for the early attention of Her Majesty's Government," was adjourned, and never resumed. On this occasion, Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, declared that "no practical grievance existed," and that "in attempting to redress the theoretical grievance, a great shock would be given to our laws and institutions."

In 1866 the debate on a motion declaring "that the position of the Established Church in Ireland is a just cause of dissatisfaction, and urgently demands the consideration of Parliament," was adjourned, and never resumed. The Irish Secretary, Mr. Chichester Fortescue, opposed the motion, not "on grounds of abstract justice," but "upon considerations of common sense, possibility, time, circumstance."

In 1867 the Fenian "rising" came, and in 1869 the Church was disestablished.

NOTE XVII.

(See page 126.)

17. "The Fenian movement agitated Ireland from 1864 to 1867, producing among other results the Clerkenwell explosion. Mr. Gladstone's statement as to the effect of this and similar attempts on the public mind of England, though too significant to be ignored, is too familiar to be repeated. I have too often heard that speech censured as unwise ; to me it has always seemed a gain that the exact and naked truth should be spoken though at the cost of some unpleasant criticism. . . . Few persons will now regret the disendowment of the Irish Church, or the passing of the Land Act of 1870 ; but it is regrettable that, for the third time in less than a century, agitation, accompanied with violence, should have been shown to be the most effective instrument for redressing whatever Irishmen may be pleased to consider their wrongs." —Lord Derby in the *Nineteenth Century*, October, 1881.

NOTE XVIII.

(See page 129.)

18. On April 8th, 1886, Mr. Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill. He proposed to establish an Irish Parliament, and an Irish Executive for the management of Irish affairs, reserving to the Imperial Parliament the following subjects : The crown, peace or war, the army, navy, militia,

volunteers, defence, etc., foreign and colonial relations, dignities, titles of honour, treason, trade, post office, coinage. Besides these exceptions, the Irish Parliament was forbidden to make any laws respecting (*inter alia*) the endowment of religion, or in restraint of educational freedom, or relating to the customs or excise. The Dublin Metropolitan Police were to remain under Imperial control for two years, and the Royal Irish Constabulary for an indefinite period ; but eventually all the Irish police were to be handed over to the Irish Parliament. Ireland's contribution to the Imperial revenue was to be in the proportion of one-fifteenth to the whole. All constitutional questions relating to the powers of the Irish Parliament were to be submitted to the Judicial Committee of the English Privy Council. The Irish members were to be excluded from the Imperial Parliament."

NOTE XIX.

(See page 145.)

19. " The Local Government [Ireland] Bill was to extend to that country, with certain modifications, the system of local self-government enjoyed by England and Scotland. The Bill might be briefly described as one to set up County Councils, Urban District Councils, Rural District Councils, and Boards of Guardians, as the various local authorities, but not Parish Councils, as they were not needed. All four sets of authorities were to be elected by ballot every three years, on a broadly

democratic franchise, identical with the Parliamentary franchise, except that it went further by including Peers and women. The County Councils (and among them were six County boroughs, being those of Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Londonderry, and Waterford) were to take over the fiscal and administrative duties of the Grand Juries, but not their work in connection with the administration of criminal law, nor in the matter of dealing with compensations for injuries, which last duty was to be handed over to the County Courts. The District Councils were to take over the work of the baronial authorities. There were to be no aldermen on the Councils, nor any ministers of religion, nor ex-officio members, except that the chairmen of Rural District Councils might sit on the County Councils. The Councils would deal with the maintenance and construction of roads, with the care of lunatics, and with a number of other local government details, and might have additional work imposed on them by orders in council, but such orders were to be laid before Parliament, and might be upset by either House in the usual way. The poor law would be administered by Boards of Guardians, and in cases of exceptional distress, the County Council might authorise the Guardians to extend the amount of out-relief granted, but the County Council would have to bear a certain portion of the additional expenditure, and the Guardians would have a check put upon possible extravagance by having the rates spread over the whole of the union to which they belonged. As to finance, Ireland was to benefit by the provision

made by Parliament for the relief of agricultural land, and her agricultural grant, amounting to £730,000 a year, would be allotted to her out of the Imperial Exchequer, and would relieve the occupier from the payment of half the county cess, and the owner from the payment of half the poor rate, the only portion of the rate that he was actually paying. In addition to this Ireland would have handed over to her the proceeds of the local licence duties, amounting to £200,000 a year; but, as the burden she had to pay at present for the matters to which this grant applied amounted to £244,000 a year, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would grant an additional sum of £79,000, so that there would be excess for the local authorities of £35,000 over liabilities."—*Annual Register*, 1898, pp. 34, 35.

NOTE XX.

(See page 151.)

20. "It is upon a people, or at least upon upper and middle classes, basking in this fool's paradise [of believing that everything was going on happily in Ireland] that Fenianism has burst, like a clap of thunder in a clear sky, unlooked-for and unintelligible, and has found them utterly unprepared to meet it, to deal with it. The dissatisfaction which they flattered themselves had been cured, suddenly shows itself more intense, more violent, more unscrupulous, and more universal than ever. The population is divided between those who wish success to Fenianism, and those who, though disapproving its means and perhaps its ends,

sympathise with embittered feelings. Repressed by force in Ireland itself, the rebellion visits us in our own homes, scattering death among those who have given no provocation but that of being English born. So deadly is the hatred, that it will run all risks merely to do us harm, with little or no prospect of any consequent good to itself. Our rulers are helpless to deal with this new outburst of enmity, because they are unable to see that anything on their part has given cause for it. They are brought face to face with a spirit which will as little tolerate what we think our good government as our bad, and they have not been trained to manage problems of that difficulty. But, though their statesmanship is at fault, their conscience is at ease, because the rebellion, they think, is not one of grievance or suffering ; it is a rebellion for an idea—the idea of nationality. Alas for the self-complacent ignorance of irresponsible rulers, be they monarchs, classes, or nations. If there is anything sadder than the calamity itself, it is the unmistakable sincerity and good faith with which numbers of Englishmen confess themselves incapable of comprehending it. They know not that the disaffection which neither has nor needs any other motive than aversion to the rulers, is the climax to a long growth of disaffection arising from causes that might have been removed. What seems to them the causelessness of the Irish repugnance to our rule is the proof that they have almost let pass the last opportunity they are ever likely to have of setting it right. They have allowed what once was indignation against

particular wrongs to harden into a passionate determination to be no longer ruled on any terms by those to whom they ascribe all their evils. Rebellions are never really unconquerable until they have become rebellions for an idea. Revolt against practical ill-usage may be quelled by concessions ; but wait till all practical grievances have merged into the demand for independence, and there is no knowing that any concession, short of independence, will appease the quarrel.

“ But what, it will be asked, is the provocation that England is giving to Ireland, now that she has left off crushing her commerce and persecuting her religion ? What harm to Ireland does England intend or knowingly inflict ? What good, that she knows how to give, would she not willingly bestow ? Unhappily, her offence is precisely that she does not know, and is so well contented with not knowing, that Irishmen who are not hostile to her are coming to believe that she will not and cannot learn.

“ Calm men. . . who disapprove of Fenianism, and of all that the Fenians are doing, and who have no preference for separation itself, are expressing a deliberate conviction that the English nation *cannot* see or understand what laws or institutions are necessary for a state of Society and civilisation like that of Ireland. The English people ought to ask themselves, seriously and without prejudice, what is it that gives sober men this opinion of them, and endeavour to remove it, or humbly to confess that it is true, and fulfil the only duty which remains performable by them on that supposition, that of withdrawing from the attempt.

“ That this desperate form of disaffection, which does not demand to be better governed, which asks us for no benefit, no redress of grievances, not even any reparation for injuries, but simply to take ourselves off and rid the country of our presence—that this revolt of mere nationality has been so long in coming proves that it might have been prevented from coming at all. More than a generation has elapsed since we renounced the desire to govern Ireland for the English ; if at that epoch we had begun to know *how* to govern her for herself, the two nations would by this time have been one. But we neither knew, nor knew that we did not know. We had got a set of institutions of our own, which we thought suited us—whose imperfections we were, at any rate, used to ; we, or our ruling classes, thought that there could be no boon to any country equal to that of imparting these institutions to her, and as none of their benefits were any longer withheld from Ireland, Ireland, it seemed, could have nothing more to desire. What was not too bad for us, must be good enough for Ireland, or if not, Ireland, or the nature of things, was alone in fault.

“ It is always a most difficult task which a people assumes when it attempts to govern, either in the way of incorporation, or as a dependency, another people very unlike itself. But whoever reflects on the constitution of society in these two countries, with any sufficient knowledge of the states of society which exist elsewhere, will be driven, however, immediately to the conclusion that there is probably no other nation of the civilised world which,

if the task of governing Ireland had happened to devolve on it, would not have shown itself more capable of that work than England has hitherto done. The reasons are these: First, there is no other civilised nation which is so conceited of its own institutions, and of all its modes of public action as England is; and secondly, there is no other civilised nation which is so far apart from Ireland in the character of its history, or so unlike it in the whole constitution of its social economy; and none, therefore, which, if it applies to Ireland the modes of thinking and maxims of government which have grown up within itself, is so certain to go wrong."—John Stuart Mill, *England and Ireland*.

THE END

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