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THE

SPEECHES

OF

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, BART., M.P.,

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER;

THE HON. R. BOURKE, M.P.,

UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS;

AND

THE HON. E. STANHOPE, M.P.,

UNDER SECRETARY FOR INDIA;

DELIVERED AT THE

GREAT CONSERVATIVE DEMONSTRATION,

AT LEEDS,

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THE LUNCHEON.

Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, who was received with loud and prolonged cheers, said: Mr. Chairman, my Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I own that it is with some diffidence that I rise to address this assembly in response for the toast which has been so eloquently proposed by the chairman. For my own part, whilst I listened to him I could not help wishing that we heard him sometimes in another place. (Cheers.) But I rise, as I say, with diffidence, because I know that it will be my duty to make a rather extraordinary demand upon your patience, and I know how difficult it is to address a large audience upon so dry a subject as I shall have for some time to trouble you with. At the same time you must be aware of what the real state of the case is. Our opponents have made a great many attacks on Her Majesty's Government. Those attacks have been now put into shape, brought to a head, and enforced in the most vigorous language by that great master of eloquence, the real leader of the Liberal party, Mr. Gladstone. He has gone through a campaign of no ordinary magnitude, and a very great amount of powder in the form of speeches has been fired off. But, as sometimes happens after a great action in which there has been a heavy discharge of musketry and artillery, it turns out that very few people have been killed—(laughter)—because the shot has gone over their heads, so I think it will appear to be the case with regard to the great display of oratory to which we have lately been listening with wonder. (Hear, hear.) And indeed I am told—I don't vouch for it myself, but I am told—that in the ranks of the Liberal party themselves there is something very different from exultation, something rather in the nature of dismay—(hear, hear)—at a great deal that has been said by Mr. Gladstone—(hear, hear)—and I am told that there are, if not among the leaders, at least among the great intelligent body of the Liberal party, many who disclaim and altogether shrink from a large number of the sentiments which he expressed, and others which he not very distantly hinted at. But they all take comfort in this: they say, "After all there was one part of his demonstration which

was perfectly unanswerable, and that was his attack on the finance of the Government." And I feel that I am now coming before you, as much as anything else, for the purpose of answering some part of his charge against our financial policy. (Cheers.) Now, I know very well what a capital audience a Yorkshire audience is, because I had the pleasure, some two or three years ago, of meeting a large number of Yorkshiremen at a time when Mr. Gladstone had been making another crusade through the country. I remember the patience and the care with which that audience listened to all that had then to be said, and I am quite sure that on the present occasion I shall meet with the same indulgence. Perhaps, too, you will sympathise with me, because in merely speaking to you about finance on an occasion like this I know I am exposing myself to Mr. Gladstone's great wrath—(hear, hear)—for the first and principal charge which he makes against me is this most serious one—namely, that I made a speech on the question of finance at a dinner at the London Guildhall. I believe he thinks that act to have been quite as wicked as any of the wars in which we have been engaged. (Laughter.) But I trust that, in spite of that, you will allow me to make you a few words of observation. Now I know that Mr. Gladstone is such an authority in matters of finance that many people are disposed to take whatever he says entirely on trust, and I have observed a very touching instance in this town. There is a very intelligent newspaper—a very first-class newspaper—that we all know, which is published in Leeds—the *Leeds Mercury*—a newspaper which is written fairly and intelligently. Well, I saw the other day that Mr. Gladstone himself in one of his speeches made a slip. He unfortunately informed his audience in Scotland that the income-tax had been raised to 6d., and the editor of the *Leeds Mercury* not only enforced that imaginary fact upon his readers, but went on to say that we have now the pleasure of paying a sixpenny income-tax to gratify the predilections of Lord Beaconsfield. I wish publicly to tender my best thanks to that gentleman for the very great liberality of his proceedings, for although he is not obliged to pay more than 5d., we now know that he, apparently out of his goodwill to Lord Beaconsfield, pays 6d. But really it is impossible we can accept in a blind way everything Mr. Gladstone has stated in this campaign. Why, you know that he himself has had to correct some things he told his audience. He referred to Scotland as being the country

indicated in a beautiful song as "the land o' the leal," which you know means heaven. I may say that when I read that I thought he had in his mind an idea which we have sometimes heard from America. They say in America that all good Americans when they die go to Paris; and I thought he meant that all good Liberals when they die go to Scotland—(laughter and cheers)—and therefore that in that sense Scotland might properly be called "the land of heaven." (Hear, hear.) But it seems that the real explanation was that he had so many things in his mind that he made the mistake and could not help it—(laughter)—and so he has made a great many other mistakes, and I have no doubt with the same excuse. (Cheers.) But it is important for you, gentlemen, to consider a little what Mr Gladstone's oratory amounts to, because, as I understand, you are to have a special interest in him. He has "declared to win," I am told, upon Midlothian, but at the same time he has in Leeds a sort of "stable companion" to Midlothian, which is to try his paces and perhaps to provide him with a safe seat in case the other should fail him—(laughter and cheers)—and therefore you are particularly interested in considering what his statements are worth and how they have to be examined. Now let me avoid, as far as I can, plunging you unnecessarily into a great wilderness of figures, and let me endeavour to disentangle from Mr. Gladstone's statements the principal charges which I understand him to make against us. In the first place, he told his audience at Edinburgh that we had increased the national expenditure by an amount of eight millions and a quarter; secondly, he says we have not made a proper provision for the expenditure which we have brought upon the nation. And then he brings a number of charges—of which I will speak by-and-by—against us for having broken all the rules of finance. Well, but now let us see about this charge of having increased the national expenditure by eight millions and a quarter. I demur altogether to the manner in which he has made his comparison. What has he done? He takes the expenditure of the last year of his own Government—the year 1873-74—and he compares that with the published accounts of the last completed year of the Conservative Government —1878-79; and he does that in a very fair way, because he deducts on either side the cost of the charges for collecting revenue, and he gives the comparison of the net receipts only. So far, I have not a word to say against him. But then he

proceeds, in order to make out his comparison, to deduct, on the one side, from his own expenditure two large sums, £3,200,000 for the Alabama indemnity, and £800,000 for the Ashantee war; while, on the other side, he declines to allow us to deduct from our expenditure any of the extraordinary payments which were occasioned by our preparations to prevent war in Europe—(loud cheers)—and the expenditure incurred in the South African war. I see he is good enough to say he will allow us to deduct what we have expended on education and on local subventions, because he thinks there is some justification or excuse for these. But he won't allow us to deduct the other expenditure. Well, that is the most absurd and illogical way of making a comparison that I ever heard of. (Cheers.) If he likes to say, "We will deduct the extraordinary expenditure in the one," then you must deduct it also in the other. Or if he likes to say, "We will compare the whole with the whole without deducting anything"—that also is open to him. But he has no right to say, "I will deduct this expenditure because it was good, and I won't deduct that because it was bad." Why, if you carried it so far as that, he might say, "I deduct from the expenditure of the year 1873-74 all the salaries of the Cabinet Ministers because they were good men, and I won't deduct them on the other side because they are wicked men." (Laughter and cheers.) Now, I claim that we ought to be allowed to deduct our extraordinary expenditure just as much as he does his. I admit that the Alabama expenditure was of an extraordinary character, and I am far from complaining of the course that was taken. I have no right, I should be the very last person who had a right, to complain of the course that was taken with regard to that settlement. But I must remind the British public of that which is very carefully kept out of sight—I mean the cause of that expenditure. How came it that there was any such bill brought against the British Government? Why, it was owing to the deliberate—I will not say the deliberate—but to the culpable negligence of the Government of Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone in allowing those ships which preyed upon American commerce to be built in and to leave this country. (Cheers.) And I say that we have no right whatever to be asked to deduct expenditure which was the result of that negligence, and which fell upon us in the form of the payment that had to be made for the Alabama

claims. And I see again, with regard to that Ashantee war, Mr. Gladstone says:—"I deduct that because it was a war that nobody wished for, and which came upon us very much against our desires." But I may surely say the same thing for the war in South Africa, for nothing came upon us with more complete unwillingness on the part of the Government than did that South African war. (Cheers.) Well, then, if I am to deduct their extraordinary expenditure, what am I to deduct on our side? It will not be four millions, but it will be something like four millions and three-quarters. In the first place, there is a million and a half that was taken as a vote of credit for the South African war; and, in the second place, there were the supplementary estimates which were added in the preceding year to the army and navy expenditure for the purpose of the preparations against the possibility of a war in Europe. These supplementary votes, which were taken as additions to the charge for the army and navy, amounted to £3,300,000, and the result was that in that way we had an extraordinary expenditure of about four millions and three-quarters.* I see that a great many people have failed to notice that there was any such extraordinary addition to our army and navy expenditure, and I see that some very able gentlemen—a gentleman, for instance, who is a candidate in a neighbouring borough, Mr. Waddy, has made a charge against us, in which he has altogether failed to see that the expenditure which he has quoted against us is not our ordinary army and navy expenditure, but includes that large sum which we had to take in order to prevent, as I say, a European war which would have been far more costly. (Cheers.) We will argue by-and-by the question whether that expenditure was judicious, and whether it was necessary. We will argue by-and-by whether it was cheaper for us to spend some six or seven millions upon preparations to avert war, or to have allowed a state of things to have arisen that would have plunged us into a second Crimean war with its tenfold expenditure. (Cheers.) I say we will argue all these things by-and-by, but we insist, in the first place, upon having comparisons of the amount of expenditure made fairly, and with like against like. Therefore, I now say our excess of expenditure over the expenditure of Mr. Gladstone's Govern-

* It may appear, when the appropriation accounts are presented, that some portion of the sums so voted were not expended, and that the supplementary expenditure was nearer £4,500,000 than £4,750,000.

ment was not, as he puts it, eight and a quarter millions, but about seven and a half millions. Even that, however, is a very large amount on paper. But, let me ask you to look a little behind, and to inquire what were the causes of this apparent increase of seven and a half millions, because there is the point upon which our attention ought to be fixed. Is the increase real, or is it only apparent? I have just taken out a note of what the items are. There was an increase in the charge for the debt of £1,937,000; there was an increase in the army and navy expenditure of something like £2,300,000, and there was an excess upon the civil expenditure of £3,500,000. You may think that that addition of £1,937,000, or nearly £2,000,000, in the charge for the debt is in itself a very strong and conclusive evidence against the present Government, and you will naturally say, "You are making bad worse when you say that the charge for the debt of this country has under your management increased nearly £2,000,000 in five years." That is just one of the points upon which it is necessary we should clear our minds, and that we should understand what this debt charge really is. I hold in my mind here a little extract from the paper from which all these figures have been taken. It is what is called the statistical abstract of the United Kingdom. It is a little blue book which anybody may get, and which is very instructive; and if you look at and see what the comparison is of the different parts of the debt, you will see at once how this great increase arises. Now, the charges for the debt which were in the year 1874 £26,700,000, have risen to £28,644,000, and that is divided into these items. In the first place there is a charge for the interest on the Funded Permanent Debt. That has not risen; that has diminished. That has fallen from being £21,986,000, or very nearly £22,000,000 in 1874, to £21,500,000 in 1879. That is a very curious thing. If you say that the interest on the Funded Permanent Debt has diminished by half a million a year, and if you acknowledge that which everybody acknowledges, that upon the whole the debt has not been increased but has diminished —some say by more and some say by less, but it certainly has not increased in these five years—how is it that there can be so large an increase in the annual charge, an increase of £1,937,000? Let us see. What is the next item? Terminable annuities. These have risen from £4,586,000 to £5,711,000. There has been an increase in the terminable annuities of something like £1,100,000

a year. That means that we are converting permanent debt into debt which is to expire, that we are redeeming debt at a considerably accelerated ratio every year, and that in consequence, though we are paying more within the year, we are paying that in order the more rapidly to get rid of and to discharge the National debt. Let me give you an instance. One thing we did ourselves—one step which I took at our very first coming into power, in our very first Budget, was to cancel £7,000,000 of permanent debt and to create instead an annuity charge of £650,000 a year, which will expire in 1885. That was adding greatly to our annual charges, but it was adding to our charges in order to diminish debt, and you will find the benefit of this when you come to the year 1885, and when you find that annuities which have been created, and which are nearer five millions a year than four millions—they are quite four millions and three-quarters a year—will come to an end in that year and will relieve you of all that amount of charge. (Cheers.) I admit that some portion of these additional annuities is due not to the action I have been describing, but to the creation of new annuities in consequence of the creation of new debt, but not one sixpence of that new debt which has been created in the form of short annuities, not one single sixpence of that, is due to the action of the present Government. It is due to the obligations thrown upon them by preceding Governments in respect of the fortifications and in respect of the barracks that we have had to provide. (Cheers.) These gentlemen who are so extremely particular as to our conduct in not providing by taxation all that has to be paid within the year didn't do it themselves when they had to provide for the fortifications, they didn't do it themselves when they had to provide for the barracks of the country. No; they initiated a series of borrowings which we have had to carry on, and which have entailed a charge of about £490,000 a year which forms part of the £1,100,000 addition to the charge for annuities. (Cheers.) The next item is a very small one. It is the charge of the permanent unfunded debt, which has not varied, or hardly varied at all, within these five years. It amounts to £138,000. Then comes another charge to which I must beg especial attention. It is the charge of £633,000 for this year for the new sinking fund. The new sinking fund is not an addition to expenditure at all. It is money directly applied to buying up and cancelling debt. It is, in fact, an arrangement which was made two or three years ago on the suggestion of the present Government, which I explained in

the Budget of the year, by which we raised the amount which the country pays year by year for the debt charge, and we fixed it at a permanent amount of £28,000,000 a year. That was undoubtedly adding to the charges, but not to the expenditure. The additional sum was not to be spent,—or thrown away as they call it,—upon one service or another, but was to enable you to redeem the debt at a greater rate than you were doing it before. The charge for the debt had fallen to about £26,700,000, and it was raised at once to £28,000,000 by the decision of Parliament that they would year by year set aside £28,000,000 for the discharge of the interest of the debt and for applying whatever might remain over when that interest had been defrayed to the redemption of more debt. If you had kept the accounts in the old way this £633,000 would have been counted as part of the surplus for this year; but because it is not so accounted for—because it is kept within that new arrangement which I have explained—they are good enough to set it down as an increase of expenditure. It is no increase of expenditure whatever. (Loud cheers.) Then we come to another charge, which is outside the £28,000,000, and that consists of interest on loans not forming a part of the permanent charge for debt. Now, what are those loans? They are of two different characters. There have been some, no doubt, which have been raised for purposes which are of the character of special services. There has been a small amount raised by the use of exchequer bonds for the purpose of providing the amount required for the services of the year over and above the ordinary military and naval expenditure; but the greater part of the charge for these loans, which is outside the £28,000,000, and which comes to £644,000, is not to be counted as expenditure at all. It has been incurred for this simple purpose—to enable us to borrow money in order to lend it out again to the different localities of the country. Every sixpence that has been so lent out is thoroughly covered, not only in point of security, but covered also in point of interest by the payments that are received back from the localities. (Cheers). You may say, of course, that this is an addition to expenditure. But then you must look to the other side of the account, and you will find that that addition to expenditure is fully covered and more than covered by the payments that we receive back on the advances that are made. (Cheers.) For instance, advances have

been made to Leeds. I am not sure that I am right, but my impression is that something like £300,000 has been advanced on good security to the borough of Leeds. We borrow that money; we pay an interest on what we borrow; we receive from you in return the interest on what we have lent, and the money is repaid within a certain number of years. (Applause.) That may be or may not be a good arrangement, but it is altogether confusing and distracting to reckon expenditure of this kind as if it were an addition to the expenditure of the nation. (Cheers.) Well, there are some people who say, "Ah, but this is a very bad system, that you should be lending out to the localities." Well, I don't know how that may be, or how the different localities will think on that subject; I don't know whether it is the intention of our opponents, if they come into power again, to reverse this, amongst the other things they are going to reverse. Perhaps they may. But I venture to say that if they do, there will be a good deal to reckon with the member for Birmingham and other economical borough representatives; and I venture to add this remark, that it will be reversing not only our policy but still more reversing their own. (Cheers.) Because, what is the history of this system? Liberal Governments found upon certain occasions that it was desirable to make advances to some places, in order to enable them to establish harbours of their own; or, again, when they passed the Education Act, that it was expedient to make advances throughout the country for the building of schools. They calculated by the way that there would be an amount of something like £4,000,000 that they would have to advance for that. Why, the London School Board alone has taken up four millions, and I believe at least something like nine millions have been taken up by school boards throughout the country. (Cheers.) Well, then they made a similar arrangement when they passed their Sanitary Act. They said: "We are calling upon or inviting the municipalities to undertake great sanitary works. It is fair that they should be assisted by advances from the Exchequer Loan Fund," and so they ran on pledging the Exchequer Loan Fund for loans here and for loans there. And they never lived in office to see the effect of their work. They had not considered how those funds which they had so liberally promised—and which promise we, of course, were bound to fulfil—they had not considered how those funds were to be provided. We had, of course, to determine how that was

to be done, and the way in which we did it was by temporary borrowing, not adding to the permanent funded debt. We decided not to bring the charge within the twenty-eight millions we desired to keep appropriated to the permanent funded debt in order that it might be steadily and rapidly reduced. We determined to do it by borrowing in the open market, or from the Bank of England, or from the National Debt Commissioners, money on which we should have to pay interest, which would be sufficient for these purposes. That is what we have done. We have done that in the case both of those loans which have entailed a charge, I think, at this time of something like £300,000 a year; and in the case of another investment of national money, that is, the purchase of the shares in the Suez Canal. (Loud cheers.) Those are charges which are entirely covered by the repayment on the one hand by localities and the repayment on the other hand which the Khedive of Egypt is bound to make to us, and as long as those payments are regularly made there is no charge whatever that falls on the exchequer. Then there is one more item under that head for which there is no doubt we are responsible, and that is for the interest upon the five or six millions of exchequer bonds that have been issued to meet the war expenditure, which charge in the last year, 1878-9, amounted to £129,000. Therefore I say, with regard to this first great item of the seven and three-quarters millions, which I acknowledge appears to be the increase on our expenditure—of this £1,937,000 there is only £129,000 which I acknowledge as being in any way real. And I say even as against that we have paid off more debt, and have reduced the charge of the debt in a larger proportion, as you will see, by the reduction of half a million a year on the charge for the first item—the permanent funded debt. I say we have reduced the charge for the permanent funded debt considerably more than this addition of £129,000 amounts to on the other side of the account. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, really I am shocked to be obliged to trouble you at such length upon such matters. I will run as rapidly as I can through the other items of charge for the army and navy—of which I have already spoken. I might go into a justification for the advances which have undoubtedly taken place in that expenditure. No doubt we have paid more and are paying more for the army, and it is quite right that we should do so. (Cheers.) The advance is not large; it has

been something less than one million and a half upon the regular army services, and that is including the increase of the payment of our soldiers, and that increase made in a form which is far the wisest and most convenient—namely, in deferred pay, in the shape of pensions, which will attach your men to your colours by the knowledge that they have that deferred pay to look forward to. If you intend to have a strong voluntary army you must be prepared to pay them liberally and properly. (Cheers.) We have been unlucky in this respect, that we have not only had to meet the charge of this new system of deferred pay, but have also had a very heavy charge of pensions, which has come upon us in consequence of this being just the time when those additional men who were enlisted long ago for the Crimean war for 21 years' service come for their discharges. (Cheers.) I will only glance rapidly at the civil expenditure. I told you it was three and a half millions increase. One and a half millions of that is due to the increased charge for education, and two millions to the charges taken off the ratepayers, and charged on the Consolidated Fund; and when you hear that called an increased expenditure it is not an increased expenditure at all, because the ratepayers are tax-payers also, and whatever the charge is which is thrown upon the taxes generally is a relief to that great body of ratepayers upon whom such heavy charges have been thrown. (Cheers.) With regard to the charge that we have not provided enough to meet our expenditure, I say, first, that although we have not professed to provide for all our exceptional or war expenditure by taxes in a single year, we do propose to provide for it in a very short term of years. Secondly, I say that the expenditure of each year has been well within the income of the year—considerably within the income of the year—(cheers)—leaving out the extraordinary expenditure for war purposes; and, thirdly, I say that, after you have provided for the extra expenditure for war purposes, if you set against it the amount which you have cancelled of debt, the balance is clearly in favour of the cancelling of debt. In the two years which are most challenged we spent for special war services £8,275,000. The deficiencies only amounted to £4,930,000; so that we provided out of taxes—which would have been a surplus otherwise—£3,345,000 in those years. But in spite of having had to raise the balance—£4,930,000—by loan, the balance of reduction of debt in those two years amounted to no less than

£4,400,000. I say it is perfectly monstrous to make this a ground of complaint against us at a time like this, at a time such as we have been going through, at a time when we have been undoubtedly pressed by a want of elasticity in the revenue, at a time of commercial depression, of bad harvests and agricultural depression, and when special calls have had to be met, and when at the same time we have had thrown upon us the large charges entailed by our predecessors in their expenditure for fortifications —I say it is rather a matter of great thankfulness that we have been able to spread the charges as we have done, and to produce so satisfactory a result. (Cheers.) I will not detain you with many more remarks, certainly not of a financial character; but I wish to make one remark upon that curious fortification vote. You remember that Lord Palmerston's Government in 1860 wanted to raise money for fortifications. Instead of raising it, as Mr. Gladstone now says they ought to have done, by taxation in that year, they raised it by a system of borrowing, and throwing the charge over twenty-five years. The amount of principal which has been repaid has been in certain proportions which I will give you. I divide the different Governments. I find that Lord Palmerston's Government, which laid on this charge, in the seven years of its existence, raised four and a half millions and only paid off £450,000 of it. The next Government, Lord Derby's, for the same service, entailed on them by their predecessors, raised £1,000,000, and paid off £355,000. Mr. Gladstone's Goverment raised £1,220,000, and paid off about the same amount, £1,250,000; but Lord Beaconsfield's Government, in these five years for which we have been responsible, have raised only £650,000, and have paid off £2,450,000. (Loud cheers.) Gentlemen, Mr. Gladstone has charged us with many offences, and he has charged me in particular with grievous offences in not providing for the revenue of each year by way of taxation. I could quote, if it were not that time is now running short, passages from his own speeches in the year 1860 with regard to the China war which entirely justify what we have done. He says that we have kept Parliament in ignorance this year of the expenditure that was to be incurred for the South African vote, and that not one shilling did I provide to meet that expenditure in the month of April. Anybody who reads what I said on that occasion will see perfectly well that I stated we had a surplus of £1,900,000, and that I hoped that that would

be sufficient to cover our expenditure. (Cheers.) Before Parliament rose we were able to give a fairer and better estimate, and we did so. (Cheers.) But what did Mr. Gladstone in 1860, when he brought forward his great Budget and made great changes in the remission of taxation? He made hardly a reference to that China war except to say that an expedition was going out, which, in the first place, was to be the bearer of peaceful remonstrance. Everybody else knew what was intended, and that it was quite certain it would bring about a war. In the face of that he made all his financial arrangements for the year, and then in the month of August he came forward with a supplementary Budget of £3,800,000; and when he was told that that being the case it was a gigantic delusion which he had practised upon Parliament he said, "No. Why Parliament was sitting at the time, and Parliament knew just as much about these matters as we did, and Parliament could have formed its own idea of the probabilities of the case, and therefore we were not bound to tell them." (Laughter.) I am sure Parliament could have formed a much better idea of the probabilities of the Zulu expenditure on the Budget which I submitted to Parliament in April last than they could of the China expenditure at the time of the Budget in 1860. And when the time came, how did Mr. Gladstone meet his expenditure? Why, not all by taxation, but he said partly by taxation —partly by sources other than taxation, "as is usually the case in war expenditure." (Laughter and cheers.) That is what Mr. Gladstone said in those days. (Laughter and cheers.) Well, gentlemen, I must ask you to forgive me for having dwelt so long upon these dry matters. (Cheers.) I felt before I came down how impossible it would be to do justice to them; I feel still more now how impossible it is. Yet let me add a word upon one or two things. One is with regard to the imaginary floating debt, which some people suppose is to fall down upon us and crush us. It is not the case that there is any danger whatever from the existence of that debt in that form. The debt is partly, certainly, in the hands of the public, in the hands of those who take our Treasury bills from quarter to quarter and from month to month. The demand for those bills shows very plainly that it is a convenient form of investment, and certainly it is one that is profitable to the exchequer. But with regard to the great bulk of the debt, it is not in hands which could suddenly and inconveniently throw it upon the exchequer. It is in

the hands of the National Debt Commissioners themselves, and being in their hands we know we cannot be put to the inconvenience to which we might otherwise be put, by a large amount of really floating debt. (Applause.) One thing I wish to say more. Mr. Gladstone accuses me of being "a chicken-hearted Chancellor of the Exchequer" for not standing up for details of economy. One would really suppose that he little knows how much a Chancellor of the Exchequer has to do—not in Parliament, but in the departments—during the preparation of the estimates. (Hear, hear.) That is the time when the pruning-hook has to be applied; and I say that, looking at the condition of our Civil Service Estimates, we defy him or any one else to say that there has not been a strict hand kept over those estimates. (Cheers.) But let me ask Mr. Gladstone, when questions have come forward in the House of Commons, and when it has been our duty to press measures of economy, what sort of support have we had from him and his friends. (Hear, hear.) You have heard, no doubt, that during the last session the House of Commons was kept up a whole night and never went to bed until eight o'clock in the morning. What was that about? It was owing to the resistance offered by a certain section of the extreme Liberal party, headed by Mr. Chamberlain, and supported by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, a member of Mr. Gladstone's Government—(cheers)—to an attempt made by the Government to limit the expenditure upon these advances to localities, and where was Mr. Gladstone, and where were those great economists on that occasion? Voting against us or absent. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I apologise for the great length of time that I have taken. ("No, no," and cheers.) I can assure you that this is a matter of the most serious importance, and I connect it in this way with the particular position of the Liberal party. Mr. Gladstone has for a length of time been denouncing and endeavouring to persuade the country to reject the foreign policy and the general policy of the Government. He has used every argument in his power. He has attended meeting after meeting, and poured forth volumes of eloquence upon the subject. But he has failed, and rightly failed, to convince the judgment of the nation. (Cheers.) But he believes and there may be others who believe, that though the nation is not to be turned from its course of policy by considerations of a political character, or by such considerations as he has been in the habit of urging—though the country may be deaf to

arguments of that kind—they will not be deaf to arguments addressed, as it is eloquently said, to their breeches pocket. (Laughter and cheers.) It is said, "When the constituencies see what the total expenditure is—the total cost of all these services which you have compelled them to undertake—then they will turn against you." But here comes the pinch. When the proof comes, when the prophecies have to be fulfilled—when the great demands have to be made which we are told every day must soon be made upon the tax-payer—and when instead of these demands they find proposals are made which will spare the the tax-payer and do justice to all parties, while abstaining from putting pressure on the people at a time when they are peculiarly subject to pressure—when they find all this, and when they find their ground is cut from under their feet, then they turn round upon us, and denounce us, and say, "You are guilty of deceiving and deluding the people." It is not for the sake of the people; it is not for the sake of those abstract arguments and fancy rules which are brought forward as convenience may serve, and which have been disregarded on former occasions when it did not serve the purpose of the same high authority—it is not on that account we get all these lectures, but it is in order to persuade the people that they ought to be more taxed than they are, and that it is our fault that that fact is kept from them. No man can venture to say what would be the conduct of the Opposition leaders if they were to be returned to power; but I think it is pretty evident upon one head that what they would be very much tempted to do, and what, for my own part, I believe they would do, is this—they would add pretty heavily to your taxes, and tell you it was not their fault, but the fault of their wicked predecessors. (Cheers.) When they had paid off perhaps in one year that which should have been paid off in two, they would come forward and claim great credit for remitting taxation—the taxation which they had unnecessarily put on. (Applause.) I say we have taxed fairly and equitably according to the circumstances of the case, according to precedent, and according to the real wants of the country. I say we have not overspent ourselves in attaining results which are of the greatest economical as well as political importance to the country, and I say that in the course of this expenditure we have not increased, but have reduced, the national debt, and that the finances of the country will pass from our hands to those of

our successors in a state which will be anything but such as we should regret to see. I trust a better time may by-and-by be coming, but I do not, I cannot, conceal from myself that we have had to row against the stream, whilst our opponents rowed with it. (Applause.) In the five years during which they held office the revenue derived from malt and spirits alone increased of its own accord, without any attempt at tampering with it, by no less a sum than nearly £5,500,000. During the five years we have been in office it has not increased at all, but has fallen off by something like £250,000, and that is mainly due to the commercial distress and depression, and to the agricultural depression also which has followed. Mr. Gladstone I see, quoting my Guildhall speech, has been good enough to leave out the reference I made to the commercial depression, and has further been good enough to sneer at my reference to agricultural depression; but my belief is that neither Mr. Gladstone's ignoring commercial depression, nor his sneering at agricultural depression, will convince either the manufacturers of England or the farmers of England that they have not been going through very bad times lately. (Cheers.) I trust that the time may be coming when we shall have a better prospect before us, and that we shall have the reward of the courage which the country has shewn in these few years. (Cheers.) Whatever may be the result of the next general election, when it shall come—as come it must before any lengthened period—we shall face the verdict of the country with a firm confidence, both that we have ourselves done our duty to the best of our ability and that our countrymen when they are called upon to pronounce a verdict will pronounce it, not from party considerations, but from a general consideration of the course which has been best for the interests, the honour, and the welfare of the country. (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

THE EVENING MEETING.

Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, M.P., who was enthusiastically received, said: Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I can assure you that it is with sincere pleasure that I find myself about to address so important a gathering as this. I do not know whether all who are here present belong to the same political party—probably not; and I am all the better pleased that I should have an opportunity of addressing a body of men who do not all necessarily take the same views upon political subjects; and for this reason, that it is the pride of Englishmen that they live in a country where every man is free to think for himself, where every man forms his own opinion according to the best of his ability, and gives effect to that opinion by his votes and by his actions. (Cheers.) Now, if you found that all men held the same opinions, you would naturally be led to suspect that they had not given themselves much trouble in forming them, but that they had taken them from somebody else. But what we find now increasingly among the different classes of this country is this—that whether it be by public meetings—whether it be by the study of the press—whether it be in one way or in another—the great body of our fellow-citizens are occupied in studying the political questions of the day and forming honest opinions upon them. And I will venture to say that this is one result of an honest study of any question, that it always has the effect of leading you to see there is much more to be said on both sides of it than you are at first prepared to believe, and that you are much better prepared to do justice to your opponents; and therefore I claim on behalf of those who may be politically opposed to the present Government, and who are present to-night, that they will candidly consider what we have to say, and that they will listen attentively to it. Let me say this: I know very well we can combine respect for our opponents and a candid estimate of their opinions with the strongest party ties, and with the firmest resolution to fight our own battles. And let me say to the Conservatives among you—the great bulk of those I am addressing—that it is in the perfect confidence that we have their support—that they appreciate the course which we have taken, and that

they will support us to the end—(loud cheers)—that we come before them in order to make friends and acquaintance with them. Now let me say one word with regard to that great indictment which has lately been brought against us in the name of the Liberal party. (Hear, hear.) There was an old story told of a prosecution of certain persons for some political offence; the Attorney-General took two or three days to state the case; and when he had done there were those in the jury who said, "If it took the Attorney-General two or three days to explain what the offence was, we must find the poor man innocent, for he surely could not have known that he was committing any offence at all." (Laughter.) Something like that has been the feeling produced upon my mind by the very lengthened and elaborate and profuse denunciations of our policy to which we have lately been listening—(hear, hear)—and I must say that I have myself, and I know many others have been also considerably bewildered by finding that every sort of complaint small and great is heaped together, and every offence that can be conceived is charged against the unfortunate men who now hold the position of Her Majesty's Ministers. When you find that your opponent is under the impression that from the moment you awake in the morning until the moment you go to sleep at night, and probably in your dreams also, you are occupied with nothing but devising evil and mischief against the country, you can't but think that it is possible he may be just a little prejudiced—(laughter)—and therefore you take with some little allowance the charges which he makes against you. But let me point out this great difference between the position of Ministers who have to conduct the affairs of the country and the position of their critics and opponents. The critic has nothing to do but to find fault; the Government have to decide what, upon every occasion, they will do—(hear, hear)—and it is not the question whether there is a fault to be found with conduct here or there, but what would the other alternative have been. Could they have done other than they have done without producing much greater mischief? I have referred to speeches that have been made in the name of the Liberal party by its great leader. I wish to refer for a moment to another speech that was made a day or two ago by another great ornament of the party—and I use the words with all sincerity, for I admire greatly the abilities of Mr. Bright. But I must say that a more extraordinary speech, or a speech containing more extraordi-

nary doctrines than that which he lately made, it has seldom been my lot to hear from a man in his position. I won't say that he advocated a Republic in this country, but he went uncommonly near it. I won't say that he advocated throwing off our colonial empire, but I would point out that he did say, in comparing this country with the United States, that we had the whole strength of this country in these islands, and the rest of the British Empire was no source of strength, but a source of weakness and danger to us. (Hisses.) Well, I am the last to deny that the position of this country at the head of an enormous empire, such as the Empire of Britain, is a position compelling anxiety and demanding watchfulness and courage, but I think we ought to be ashamed of ourselves if we speak of the great Colonial Empire of England as a source simply of danger and of weakness. (Cheers.) I maintain that if we do our duty by that empire, if we use aright the influence which we ought to have, which we do possess, over those great communities which are springing up all over the globe, we shall not only be keeping a proud position for ourselves, but a position that will be of the greatest advantage to the civilised world, because the position of England is such that she must naturally desire to promote peace, she must naturally desire to promote the development of commerce, and she must naturally desire in all parts of the world to do her part in the promotion of good government. (Cheers.) I maintain that the heart of England—whatever may be the differences which may exist amongst us upon particular points—is sound upon this question. I maintain that it is not only in the Conservative ranks, but it is in the great body of the nation, that you will find such sentiments as these prevalent. You have had very near you a notable instance of the manner in which such sentiments as these have swayed the career and conduct of a distinguished man. I refer, of course, to one who has recently passed away from us, one who was not a member of the Conservative party, one with whom many differences had continually prevailed, and who had never shrunk from expressing boldly his opinions upon the policy of whatever Government was in office—one who won a high place in the estimation of his countrymen by the known fearlessness and honesty of his opinions—I mean the late Mr. Roebuck. (Cheers.) I say that you have there an example of a man who by his ability perhaps took a more prominent position, but who did not take a sounder and truer posi-

tion than large numbers of those who do not reckon themselves as mere party Conservatives. There are in this country large bodies of men who, if the question arise between their party and their country, will not fail or hesitate for one moment to give the preference to the higher duty—their duty to their country. (Cheers.) Now, let me say a few words upon one or two of the questions which have been most prominently brought forward of late, and especially I would put first a very few words I will say upon the subject of that greatest and most interesting of our dependencies, India. (Hear, hear.) What I say with regard to India will be very little indeed, because we happily have present amongst us a friend of mine who by his official connection with that particular department, and by his own great ability and power of expression is thoroughly competent, and more competent, to enter into details upon these subjects than I should be if I were to attempt to detain you upon them. But it is my duty, as one of Her Majesty's Ministers—it is my duty and it is also my desire, as one who has had reason to take special interest in India from having myself been once connected with the administration of that department—it is my wish to say a very few words upon the present state of affairs in that country. I believe that we have, since we have been the rulers of a great part of India—since we have had a predominant influence over the whole Peninsula—I believe that we have, on the whole, amidst great difficulties and with occasional mistakes, done our duty by the people of that great country, that we have largely conduced to their social and to their material advancement, and whether we may have made mistakes here or mistakes there in detail, the general policy which we have pursued has been a policy calculated for the good of those to whom it is applied. (Cheers.) But at the present moment our eyes, when we turn them towards India, are drawn especially towards its frontiers. They are drawn to Afghanistan, and there is a natural anxiety amongst our people to know what is passing there, to know what is our policy with regard to that country, and to know what is the present prospect of our affairs. The policy of Her Majesty's Government in regard to the north-west frontier of India has been declared clearly and emphatically over and over again. It is a policy of defence, and not a policy of annexation—(hear, hear)—it is a policy which aims at securing our people in India from vain alarms of movements and invasions

from outside ; it is a policy which is adopted not only for the high imperial objects of the empire, but in an especial degree for quieting the minds of the people of India, that they may not think that there are dangers of invasions and dangers of wars such as we might feel it difficult to prevent. And, therefore, it has been with a view to the better protection of that frontier and to the improvement of the security of our people in India that we have undertaken the policy of the last year with regard to Afghanistan. It has been, it is still, our earnest desire to maintain in Afghanistan a power which shall be interposed between us and any other Power that might come near us. It is our desire to see in that country a form of government that shall be suitable to the wants of its population, and shall at the same time be ready to maintain friendly relations with ourselves. (Cheers.) And it is our determination, not less for our own sakes than for the sake of the people of Afghanistan themselves, that we will not allow any foreign power to interfere to dominate the foreign policy in Afghanistan. (Cheers.) It has been a matter of deep regret to us that, in endeavouring to follow out that policy, bloodshed has occurred, and resistance and strife. We feel that there has been no option for us but to persevere and to carry through the enterprise which we had commenced. (Hear, hear.) We do not depart from the principles upon which we entered upon that contest. The events which have occurred, though they might modify in some small details the provisions which we had hoped to effect, don't affect the principles of the treaty concluded at Gundamuk, and we may say with confidence that we shall be able in but a brief period to give effect to that policy and, I hope, to bring about a happy state of affairs in Afghanistan as well as in India. (Cheers.) But for the present moment do not let it be supposed that there is anything in the position of our forces which need cause distress or anxiety in this country. (Hear, hear.) Do not let it be supposed either that the Indian Government or Her Majesty's Government are indifferent to the importance of the occasion, or that they are not taking all proper methods to strengthen and to secure the action of our troops. Everything that need be done, everything that can be done is being done, and we are confident of the result. (Loud cheers.) But we are keeping back nothing; there is no mysterious secret behind. That which we know, you know; that which we are doing, we are perfectly confident that we are

doing with the support and with the consent of the people of England. (Loud cheers.) Let me turn from India to the relations of this country with other parts of the world. We are, of course, desirous to maintain all our colonies in the possession of peace, and to give them the opportunity of development. But where we find colonies immediately bordering upon savage races and barbarous races, it is very difficult indeed always to avoid collisions with those races, and it has been a matter of necessity, a matter which has been forced upon us, that we have been brought into collision with barbarous tribes in more than one part of Africa. It was so under the late Government in the case of the Ashantee war; it has been so with us in the case of the Zulu war, and I maintain it is the duty of England, as quickly as possible to bring about a settlement of the relations between ourselves, our own people, and the natives with whom they are brought into contact, upon principles that shall be the principles of justice and of consideration for the less civilized races. (Hear, hear.) I believe that that will be the spirit with which, when this unhappy strife is finally concluded—and it is now all but concluded—in South Africa—(cheers)—will be the peaceable and happy issue of that which has been a struggle giving us no little cause for anxiety. (Applause.) Now let me say a very few words upon our European relations also. And here again I would ask you to excuse me from going into any lengthened discussion, because we have also here to-day a friend who is connected with the Foreign Department, having been Under Secretary of that department ever since the present Government came into office—(applause)—who has been its representative in the House of Commons ever since the Government came into office, and who is thoroughly competent to explain and to vindicate its policy. (Applause.) But I must say one or two words myself upon the general question. We are accused, we have been accused by no less a person than Mr. Gladstone—(groans)—of having broken up the European concert, and of having been the cause of the wars and the troubles that took place. I deny altogether that we did break up the European concert—(cheers)—and I say that if you point to the independent action taken by this country in refusing to subscribe its name to the sort of blank cheque that was presented to it in the Berlin Memorandum—if you say that our conduct in judging for ourselves and acting independently thus broke up the European concert, what do you say to

the conference which took place at Constantinople months after that, in which all the great Powers of Europe took part? Was that a sign that the concert of Europe had been broken up? Was that a sign that the action of England was causing a prolongation of difficulties which England was most anxious to appease? No, there were other causes which broke up the concert of Europe. I will not dwell upon them now. You will hear them spoken of by another. But for myself, for ourselves, for the Government, I would say that we were most anxious to maintain the concert of Europe, provided it was maintained on conditions that were consistent with the honour and the freedom and independence of action of this country. (Cheers.) Well now, what did the action of England result in? Did it result in nothing, or did it result in preventing an advance of the Power which made war upon Constantinople? Did not the opposition of England prevent the Russian force entering Constantinople? If it did not, if it was not that, what was it that prevented it? The language which England was bound to hold was language addressed to both the parties to that dispute. To Turkey we said, "Reform your administration; we will be no supporters of misgovernment. We will not tolerate the cruelties and the misdeeds which you are allowing, whether from weakness or from indifference, to take place in parts of your dominions." On the other hand we were saying to the Great Powers of Europe, "We will not allow excuses such as these to justify you in breaking up the settlement of the European family, and we will not allow them to be made the ground of excuses for your aggrandisement." (Cheers.) Nothing could have been stronger, nothing clearer than the language which England held. But England's voice was not listened to at that time. And why? Because there was no true belief that England meant to act up to what she was saying. There was a cutting saying that went abroad at that time. I do not know who was the author of it. It was said to have been the words of Prince Bismarck. They might have been his, or they might have been said by somebody else, but it was said by one shrewd observer, referring to the old saying that speech is silver and silence is gold, "Yes, but to speak first and be silent afterwards is Britannia metal." (Cheers and laughter.) Was there ever a taunt addressed to any country so bitter as this? Were there ever words used which more properly and legitimately depreciated and annihilated the influence which England ought to exercise in the councils of Europe than such

words as these? And was there any foundation for the taunt? I fear there was. Not very many years ago there were symptoms of war between two Powers in Europe, and brave words were spoken in the English Parliament. It was said at a critical moment, when the relations between Germany and Denmark were becoming very anxious, and it was a question whether Denmark should or should not submit to the stronger Power—it was said in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister of England that if such an event should take place Denmark would not stand alone. These were the words of the Liberal Prime Minister of the day. Denmark believed them; Europe may or may not have believed them; but when the crisis came Denmark did stand alone. There have been despatches written by Liberal Governments in former times, strong despatches addressed to great Powers, remonstrating against the oppressions which they observed to prevail in portions of the dominions of the Powers to whom the despatches were addressed. Some such despatch was written in the case of Poland, but the nation to whom it was addressed refused to listen to language of that sort, and the Minister of the day—not a Conservative Minister—pocketed the answers, and very wisely took care not to get into a quarrel with the strong Power with whom we had remonstrated. I am not asking whether we ought to have gone to war for Denmark, or whether we ought to have gone to war for Poland. These are questions of a totally different character; but this I do say, that England should be chary of speech, but when she speaks she should show that she is prepared to act up to that speech—(great cheering)—and this I also say, that if the action of England had any share—as I believe it had a most material share—in preventing that close of the Russo-Turkish war which seemed at one time imminent, and which particular close no other Power came forward actively and openly to prevent—if England's interference had any influence in that, it was because confidence had been inspired by the action of Her Majesty's present Government that the words of England were not mere idle words, but that they would be followed by serious and active measures. (Loud cheers.) I firmly believe that in that policy which we have pursued, though we may have been mistaken on this point or on that—though we may have been unsuccessful here or less successful there than we should have been—though there may be many points upon which there will be differences of opinion among various

classes of our countrymen—I firmly believe that the heart of England as a whole is with us—(great cheering)—that they do believe that our action has been for the advantage of our country and of Europe, and that at all events they are thoroughly satisfied that in the course we have pursued we have been guided by no personal or party motives, by no selfish considerations, but by a determination to do our duty, as we understood that duty, to our Queen, to our country, and to our allies. (Great cheering.) I hope that the fruits of all that is past may even yet be better than some believe. We are accustomed to be told that the reforms we are attempting to persuade Turkey to introduce into some parts of her dominions are mere moonshine, and that there is nothing in them. We think otherwise. We think that Turkey must have learnt a lesson. It is not our fault if she has not learnt a lesson which we have more than once impressed upon her, that there is nothing that can be more dangerous, more fatal to her existence, than that she should neglect to improve her own government, the administration of her own empire. She has been warned once, twice, thrice by England, at different periods—the warnings given before the war, and during the war, and since the war have not ceased—and, depend upon it, as long as Her Majesty's present Government have the power to speak in the name of England they will not cease to press upon Turkey that which they know to be for her own interests. I will say a very few words to you upon our home affairs. We have been, it is very true, so much taken up of late by the discussions upon foreign politics that there has been much less attention given than perhaps ought to have been given or it is desirable to give to our home affairs, and yet we don't admit that there has been any dereliction of our duty in that matter. (Cheers.) We have endeavoured as well as we could to carry on the domestic administration of this country for the maintenance of good government, for the promotion of the welfare of the people, for assisting the people to improve their own condition. I won't detain you now upon the great question of finance. I have already spoken at considerable length on the subject in this town, and as I know that a large number, nearly the whole of you, are readers of newspapers, perhaps I am not asking an unreasonable favour if I ask those of you who were not present at the Town Hall to read what will be reported on Monday of my own remarks on that question. This only will I say, that it

has been the earnest endeavour of the Government so to administer the finances of the country as to accomplish the objects that were necessary to improve our services where it was required at the smallest possible cost, and to adjust the burden of the expenditure necessarily caused in a manner that should be the least oppressive to the people. You know very well that the time through which we have been passing has been a time of great depression; you know very well that the consumption of those articles which bring in revenue to the Exchequer has fallen off, and you know that accordingly the revenue has not been in a flourishing condition for the last three or four years. At the same time we have had to provide for extraordinary and peculiar expenditure. We have been told we ought to have put on taxes. At the time that Mr. Gladstone had to make provision for a large sum for the payment of the Alabama indemnity he did not propose originally to provide for it entirely out of taxes. He proposed to raise the sum by borrowing on Exchequer bonds, but it so happened that in that year the receipts from customs and Excise were so enormously large that they covered the whole of that charge; and, consequently, a very shrewd observer and friend of ours, Lord Derby, made this remark with reference to the fact that the whole of the Alabama indemnity had been covered by the Excise, "We have drunk ourselves out of the American difficulty." (Laughter.) We are not at the present moment in a position to drink ourselves out of any difficulty at all. The Government of that day in a time of great prosperity did not think it necessary to lay on a tax because the revenue was so abundant, but they ask us at a time of depression to lay on a tax because the revenue is not so abundant. I think that a rather hard measure, and unless circumstances render it absolutely necessary, I think we ought to be very careful how we keep back the reviving prosperity of the country by unnecessarily adding to the taxation. Bear in mind that we are not increasing, but reducing our debt. (A voice: "What about the income-tax?") Well, that is not what Mr. Gladstone says it is. He told you it had got to 6d. in the £. It is nothing of the kind, we are happy to say; it is 5d.; only I think a very large number of those who used to pay income-tax under Mr. Gladstone's Administration don't know very well what the figure of the income-tax is now. (Laughter and cheers.) This reminds me of a question that was put to me—viz., how much a working man, with a wife

and four children, who neither smokes tobacco nor drinks excisable liquors, will have to pay to the revenue in taxes. It is supposed that he would consume three pounds of sugar a week, six ounces of tea, two ounces of cocoa, and two ounces of coffee. I am not responsible for the quantities, but if they are properly given the amount which the man would have to pay to the revenue would be 2½d. per week. (Laughter and cheers.) Of course he would have had more to pay under the former Administration, because he would have had to pay something upon his sugar, but we have taken off that duty. (Cheers.) With regard to other domestic matters, I say we are doing what we can to improve the condition of the working-classes and to induce them to improve their own condition. And I am satisfied that the courage and patience with which they have borne the long period of depression through which we have been passing will have their reward. (Hear, hear.) I will say no more now about England. One word let me say with regard to the sister country of Ireland. Ireland we regard with feelings of the greatest interest. There can be no doubt that Ireland has for many, many years been an object of especial solicitude to the Government of this country. I believe that the improvement which has taken place—I am not speaking of one particular season or another—but looking at the matter on the whole—the improvement which has taken place in the material condition of Ireland of late years has been most remarkable. At the present moment no doubt in parts of the country there is a certain amount of suffering. We are doing, and shall continue to do, our best to promote the employment of labour, and to alleviate the distress of the country by those means which can be adopted without the danger of pauperising the people. (Applause.) We know we should be doing them no good service, but an ill service if we were to adopt measures which would have the effect of pauperising them. But while we are anxious to promote in every way the employment of the people and the general advance of the material prosperity of Ireland, we are determined that it shall be a first condition of our rule that peace and order shall be maintained. (Loud cheers.) We will not allow ourselves to be drawn into the use of any ambiguous language. We will not allow ourselves to coquet with Home Rule, or with any other of those dangerous and alluring topics which politicians are sometimes in the habit of approaching as near as they can—

trying how near they can go without burning their fingers. (Cries of "Barran," and laughter.) We believe that the people of this country, while they have a kindly and an affectionate feeling towards their brethren in Ireland, while they are ready to do everything in their power to promote their honest and independent exertions for their own welfare, the people of this country are determined that they will allow no false sentiment and no mischievous doctrines to destroy or to imperil the unity and the integrity of the empire. (Cheers.) I regret most greatly that language has been used in quarters where I think more caution should have been observed, which tends to a delusion in that respect. We know perfectly well that nothing of the kind can ever be really countenanced by any statesman who may be responsible for the guidance of this country, and I say it is wiser, it is better, it is fairer, it is more honest, and it is more manly that the language which must be used at last should be used from the first. (Cheers.) I can assure you it has been a great pleasure to me to meet you to-day, and to feel that I have been addressing a body of men who are ready to listen with patience, and to admit arguments with some of which, perhaps, they have not all agreed. It has been a great pleasure and a great advantage to me to meet you here to-night; and all I can say is, that if you are—as I believe you are—a representative body—a fair representation of the general feeling of Yorkshire and of England at large—(hear, hear, and cheers)—the destinies of England are safe, because the heart of England is sound. (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

The Hon. Robt. Bourke, M.P., Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who was received with loud cheers, said: Gentlemen, although I confess it has been my privilege on many occasions to address large bodies of my fellow-countrymen, I can assure you I speak the words of sincerity when I say I am wholly unaccustomed to address so vast a mass of my fellow-countrymen as that which I now see before me, and if my powers are inadequate to the occasion I hope you will give me your patience and your forbearance. I can assure you that I am happy to see that there are some members of the Liberal party among our Conservative friends—(cheers)—for, in the first place, I am quite certain that they will leave this hall wiser and better men—(cheers and laughter)—and, in the second place, I can assure them that they will hear no words from me that can offend

their private honour or wound their private feelings. I am certain that there is not a Conservative here who has not a better opinion of his Liberal neighbour than to suppose that his Liberal neighbour is unable and unwilling to listen to the arguments of his political opponents—(hear, hear)—and therefore, gentlemen, I hope that you will be kind enough to bear with me for a short time whilst I say a few words upon the topics that have been alluded to already by my right hon. friend behind me. (Hear, hear.) Well, we, the members of the Government, have been assailed all over the country by language of unusual violence and statements of extraordinary inaccuracy, and we have been told at the same time, upon the highest authority, that it is wrong to impute motives to our political opponents, and our amiable enemies have been good enough to illustrate the meaning of that excellent platitude by branding us, their opponents, as manslayers, as thimble-riggers, and as political bandits. (Laughter.) This inconsistency between precept and practice is not surprising, when we call to mind that the practice of these persons with regard to foreign policy for the last three years has been in direct antagonism to the precepts which have been handed down to them by the lights of their own party—precepts which they have cast to the winds when their object is to get their opponents out of office. Well, I can only say that we care very little for such epithets when we can stand before such an assembly as I now see before me, and tell you in our conscience that we have done our best, we believe, to sustain the honour of England amidst great discouragement and in the face of unparalleled difficulties—(hear, hear, and cheers)—that we have done so without embarking upon a European war and with a very moderate expenditure of the national resources, and in the whole of these transactions we have been sustained by the representatives of the people of England, we have been sustained by those whom Lord Beaconsfield still believes are prepared to trust his Government. Under these circumstances you do not, I am sure, expect me to address you in apologetic terms. If time permitted I could justify every important step taken by Government for the last five years. (Loud cheers.) There is no charge that is more pertinaciously brought against Her Majesty's Government than that, when they declined the alliance of the three Emperors, when they declined to sign the Berlin Memorandum, they by doing so broke up the concert of

Europe. There never was a statement made more utterly opposed to all the recorded evidence upon a question of any kind. What they did with regard to the Berlin Memorandum was to maintain the concert of Europe rather than break it up. As a matter of fact, the concert of Europe was never stronger than immediately after the Government refused to sign the Berlin Memorandum. Germany, Austria, France, Italy, England, and Turkey remained on the most friendly terms, and the concert of Europe remained strong until after the Conference at Constantinople, and war was declared with Turkey. Had we signed that Memorandum, the concert of Europe would in all probability have been broken up immediately, because under that agreement, which was founded upon the coercion of Turkey, had we been induced to join Russia to coerce Turkey, we should in all probability have brought the Russian forces to Constantinople—an event which would have caused a rupture between all the Powers immediately after it took place, and each Power would have been left to fight for its own interests. We should indeed then have been left to take the chesnuts out of the fire, and we should have seen that, too late, we had been made the instruments to carry out our own folly and do that which was opposed to the best interests of England. Those who broke the concert of Europe were those who made war upon Turkey and tried to induce England to do the same. Those who applauded the war party in Russia and encouraged the Pansclavic Societies to embark upon what Prince Bismark called an "unofficial war" upon Turkey. Those are the persons responsible for the evils which have fallen on Europe with the disturbance of European peace. It was not the Tory party who broke the concert of Europe. The Tory party and many men of the Liberal party remained faithful to treaty engagements, engagements made by a Liberal Administration of a far more onerous character than any which Lord Beaconsfield has, with the assent of Parliament, contracted, engagements sanctioned by the greatest men of the Liberal party, Palmerston, Russell, Cornwall Lewis, Molesworth, Clarendon—men whom their unworthy successors seem to regard with contempt and oblivion. Another charge that has been frequently made against the Government is that we have been indifferent to the better government of Turkey. All the records prove our conduct to have been exactly the opposite. Every page of the bluebooks shows that we have

never ceased for one hour to urge upon Turkey and upon Europe the importance of improving the Government of the country, and no diplomatist in Europe has shown such ability or such strong efforts in that direction as my noble chief, Lord Salisbury. (Cheers.) We know that he laboured hard at the Conference to bring about a better government of Turkey, but owing to the evil counsels which have prevailed at Constantinople the advice of Lord Salisbury was not accepted, and, unfortunately, the Constitution which he proposed, and which he mapped out at the Conference, was not carried out into practice. Well then, again at the Congress, both Lord Salisbury and Lord Beaconsfield worked, and worked successfully, to give to many portions of Turkey a good and liberal Constitution, and now the province of Roumelia enjoys a Constitution as a fruit of those labours; and if she is only allowed fairplay by those who are opposed to her interests, as well as the interests of England, I have no doubt whatever that Constitution will bring to that country happiness, prosperity, and peace. (Cheers.) There is not one week that passes, not one hour, that we are not making efforts in the same direction, and I should like to ask you who is it that accuses us of being indifferent to the better Government of Turkey? Why, it is those who were in office for fourteen years out of eighteen, and who never lifted one single finger towards giving better government to that country—(cheers)—and who now, for the first time in their lives, find out that this ought to be the effort of English statesmen, when they find that it is convenient to raise a cry, for no other purpose in the world than to get their opponents out of office. There is another assertion that is continually made, and it is that England has never been on the side of freedom, but always on the side of despotism in this controversy. There never was a statement so opposed to the facts—the patent facts—which everybody knows, than that to which I have alluded. It is one of those statements which Macbeth would call a "dagger of the mind—a false creation of a heat-oppressed brain." (Laughter.) Well, now I don't wish to make invidious comparisons between the constitution of one European country and that of another, but I ask any candid mind to compare the constitutions that have been given to Roumelia, and compare the constitution that has been given chiefly by the efforts of Her Majesty's Government to Crete, and the constitutions and the reforms which I believe before long will be given to the rest of Turkey both European and Asiatic. I say

compare these constitutions with that which exists in those countries whose example we are blamed for not imitating, and then I ask you whether England has been, as she is declared to be, on the side of despotism and not of freedom. (Cheers.) But, I ask you, who are the blind simpletons who have supported Her Majesty's Government in this course of despotism against freedom? Not only the Tory party. Is Joseph Cowen of Newcastle—(cheers)—a friend of freedom or a friend of despotism? (A voice: "A friend of freedom.") Is Mr. Walter, one of the most experienced Liberal politicians, a friend of despotism or a friend of freedom? Is it not a calumny on the memory of John Arthur Roebuck—(loud cheers)—to declare that he was a friend of despotism and not a friend of freedom? And yet all these persons have supported the policy of Lord Beaconsfield. And I ask you again boldly—has Lord Beaconsfield, by the record of his past life, been a friend of despotism or a friend of freedom —(loud cheers)—Lord Beaconsfield, who has given to the people of this country a broader franchise than they ever before enjoyed? (Cheers.) No. The great crime that Lord Beaconsfield has committed in the eyes of his opponents is that he has made Tory principles popular principles—(hear, hear)—and that he has laid the foundations of his policy, both home and foreign, deep in the hearts and convictions of the British people. (Loud cheers.) We were told the other day that no war has ever produced more glorious results than that terrible war between Russia and Turkey which is now concluded. I will give you some of those glorious results. Besides those dreadful massacres which took place immediately after the unofficial war that was declared upon Turkey, we have the fact that tens of thousands of helpless families have been driven from their homes—homes to which they never can return —that tens of thousands of hapless women and children have suffered death by cold, starvation, and cruelty. And when we are reminded and told of glorious results, we cannot forget that these terrible events are capital in the consideration of this great question which any British Statesman ought not to ignore. (Hear, hear.) And recollect that all this has been caused by the war which our opponents now, and have all along, blamed us for not participating in. They are rather shy of saying that we ought to have gone to war, but I ask you whether you have not read often and often that the great

fault against us was that we did not coerce Turkey. What does that mean? It means nothing but that we should have coerced that country and gone to war, participated in those glorious results, but which I call the most lamentable results that have ever befallen any country. (Cheers.) I know of no results that can ever prove beneficial to Turkey or any of those unhappy provinces that would not have been far better gained by peaceful means and by adopting the advice given from time to time by Her Majesty's Government. (Hear, hear.) Another charge has been brought against us quite lately, and that is that we have augmented the power of Russia. That is very strange language to come from a man who sent an emissary to Russia for the purpose of translating his pamphlet into the Russian language, with the view of augmenting the power of the war party in Russia and inflaming the passions of that party against Turkey. (Applause.) But has this policy—has the policy of Her Majesty's Government augmented the power of Russia? Those who say so are more Russian than the Russians themselves—(cheers)—because you cannot take up a Russian paper—and I have no doubt you have seen many extracts from them—without feeling that the people of Russia say "No" to such a question, and in fact one of the great difficulties of the Russian Government at this moment is that they feel that they have made great sacrifices in this war, but that the power of Russia has not been augmented but decreased by that war. (Cheers.) You have been told to-night that I have the honour to serve under the immediate command of Lord Salisbury, and I confess that I have read and heard with the greatest indignation the aspersions that have been made not only against his policy, but I may also say against his honour and his character. (Cheers.) You recollect what Lord Salisbury is. Lord Salisbury is a man of great wealth, of great genius, of tastes for literature and science, and possessed of everything that can make cultivated life in England enjoyable, and yet Lord Salisbury has been content to give up domestic peace and comfort to embark upon what he believes to be a duty to his countrymen, from which he can get no advantage and reap no benefit whatever. (Cheers.) And what have I seen only a day or two ago with regard to Lord Salisbury? I saw in a paper—a Sheffield paper—that Lord Salisbury was accused, when he signed what is known as the Schouvaloff and Salisbury agreement, of going behind the backs of the Powers and of signing an agreement which

made the whole of the Berlin Congress a sham and a farce. That is one of those calumnies that is the most injurious and the most subtle, because it contains a certain amount of verbal truth, whereas in reality it imputes to an honourable man motives the basest that could animate any person in the world. What happened in regard to that agreement was this. We know, I can tell you, that if it had not been for that agreement no Berlin Congress would have taken place at all, and for this simple reason—it was well known in Europe that there were vital differences of opinion between the Government of England and the Government of Russia, and therefore those who had the conduct of the Conference determined that they would send no invitations to that Congress until they were certain that upon certain subjects both England and Russia would agree not to go to war, and that was the whole of the Schouvaloff agreement. The consequence was that Russia and England did agree not to go to war for those specific purposes, and when that agreement was signed the invitations were issued to the Berlin Conference. (Cheers.) But that agreement had nothing in the world to do with all those great subjects which came before the Congress and which were afterwards decided by the Congress, after long discussion, and therefore to say that Lord Salisbury went behind the backs of the Powers and signed an agreement with Russia which made the labours of the Congress a sham and a farce is saying what no diplomatist in England or on the Continent would be so completely ignorant as to utter before any number of his fellow-countrymen. But the subject which seems to excite the wrath of our opponents more than any other is that of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, which, we are told, our opponents, when they come into office—which will be some time, I think—(cheers)—are to denounce and to repudiate. Let us see what that Convention is. I will take the state of the matter upon their own hypothesis. They say that the Turkish Empire is doomed. They say that it can't last, and anything we can do to support it is all moonshine. I say, supposing that is the case, supposing that the Turkish Empire is doomed, supposing it is going to fall to pieces, and that it does fall to pieces, I ask you whether this country is prepared in such an event to see Asia Minor fall as an appanage to Russia? ("No.") I ask you whether in such a case is Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, the Euphrates route to India, to fall to the Russian Government? ("No.") I don't believe the Government of this country would

ever submit to such an event. Then, if that is the case, I want to know what responsibilities accrue to Her Majesty's Government, or to this country, in consequence of the Anglo-Turkish Convention which would not naturally accrue to her if we had no convention on the subject at all. We believe, by declaring candidly beforehand what our views upon that subject are, we shall prevent that event taking place that we think England ought to be prepared to oppose, and by offering to the Turkish Government the strongest motives to reform the government of Asia Minor, we raise up the greatest safeguard against the necessity for English interference in that country. Finding that the feeling of the country is against them regarding the aspersions they have made upon the Anglo-Turkish Convention proper, they endeavour to attack it by imputing to the Government failure in the administration of Cyprus. The mode in which they have attacked the administration of Cyprus is a very remarkable one. They find they have no real ground on which to attack the acquisition itself, but they attack its administration, and every small act of every petty policeman has been brought forward in the House of Commons as a reason for showing that we have failed in the administration. All I can say is, that I think the country has already shown that those attacks, those small and puny attacks upon the administration of Cyprus, have brought only evil reputation upon those who make them, and that the country really does believe that the administration of Cyprus has proved already an inestimable benefit to the people of that island. (Cheers.) No portion of the island has been more attacked than the Harbour of Famagusta. We were told that Famagusta was utterly useless and that it could never be made into a naval station. I should, however, like to ask you to read what appeared in the newspapers only a few days ago to the effect that several of our ironclads not only anchored in the far Harbour of Famagusta, but actually performed evolutions in that useless harbour. (Cheers.) I give that as an instance of the amount of credence that we are to place upon the statements of our opponents. (Cheers.) They wish also to impose upon the people of England by casting the aspersion upon the Government that they entered into this treaty with Turkey secretly. I ask you whether it would have been wise—whether it would not have been the act of simpletons—if Her Majesty's Government had laid this convention on the council table of the Porte before it was signed? It would have invited intrigues to be practised on the weakness of

the Government, and courted failure for a convention which we believed to be desirable for the interests of England to carry out. We were, however, quite prepared, as we did, to lay the whole state of the case before the House of Commons and the people, and we were justified in thinking that they would support Her Majesty's Government, not only in the Turkish Convention, but with regard to the secrecy—I should call it prudence—with which it was conducted. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has already told you that it had been considered to be the duty of Her Majesty's Government to increase the expenses that were formerly incurred in increasing the efficiency of the army and navy. I ask anyone who reads the newspapers whether he does not believe that it is utterly hopeless in the present state of Europe to think that any nation can obtain the least diplomatic or peaceful success unless that nation is prepared to back up its diplomacy with a certain amount of material force. And upon this subject I am happy to be able to call a witness whom at any rate our Liberal friends here will hail as first-rate testimony. Only a few days ago, in a speech from which my right hon. friend has already taken an extract, Mr. Bright said, in speaking of the condition of Europe, "I see everywhere great armies eating up the comforts of the people; everywhere menaces and acts of war." If that is Mr. Bright's description of the condition of Europe, I ask you whether the Government would not have been to blame if they had not done everything in their power to support the army and navy which had been entrusted to their care? We recollect with shame the disasters which befell the army in the time of the Crimean war—disasters for which the Liberal party were responsible, and disasters from which the nation was only saved by the patriotism of its people and by the expulsion from office of the Liberal party, who then held the reins of power. Under these circumstances I am sure you will support Her Majesty's Government in maintaining the army and navy, and not leaving the country to be attacked by the Titanic Power of the modern military system, or by the savage forces of uncivilised barbarians that we meet with in many parts of the world. To read the speeches of some of those who have been addressing the country and appealing to the confidence of the people for some weeks, one would have imagined that England had been plunged by her Government into a disastrous war, that we had lost every ally in

Europe, and that our finances were in a condition of most hopeless disorder. I have already shown you that if it had not been for the conduct of the Government we should have been plunged into war months ago. With regard to our alliances, all I can say is that we are on friendly terms at this moment with every Power in Europe; and with regard to our finances, I am happy to think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has this day dispelled all those absurdities with which unscrupulous orators have permeated the minds of the people for some time past, and which I think now, at any rate, have received a complete and decisive answer. There is no doubt that we still believe Europe is in an unsettled state, and that it will require much firmness and much discretion on the part of Her Majesty's Government to steer the vessel of the State through all the many dangers that are likely to be met with during the next few years; but I believe that, with that firmness and that discretion, there is no danger whatever of the European peace being disturbed. The preponderance of opinion amongst the highest statesmen on the Continent is on the side of England, and I will read to you two or three sentences of the speech which the Emperor of Austria made the day before yesterday to the delegations. In speaking of the policy of the Powers, the Emperor of Austria said—"Although the effects of the war have not yet passed away in the Turkish Empire, the consistent application of the Berlin Treaty will, it may be expected, lead to years of peace in the Balkan Peninsula. My Government is earnestly and studiously pursuing the task of conferring the benefits of order, and security, and civilisation upon the provinces of Bosina and Herzegovina, which have been so hardly tried by the neglect of centuries." I say that it is also the policy of Her Majesty's Government, and that is a sign that we are working heartily with the Government of Austria, and I may say with the Goverments of all other powers, in carrying out the Berlin treaty, which we hope will be a permanent settlement of those European provinces, but which our opponents are decrying, calumniating, and crying down in every way they can. I need not say that the Government of England has every desire to be on terms of peace with Russia. We believe that any difficulties which we may encounter are more due to the entanglements which ambitious men and which violent parties produce in that country than with the Government or her wisest statesmen. We shall, I am sure,

be glad to see all those questions settled which now agitate the internal condition of that country, and which, we grieve to see, are causing trouble not only to her wisest statesmen, but also to her royal family. I am quite sure I am speaking your sentiments as Englishmen when I say we have no sympathy with assassins, we have no sympathy with those who would tear up the foundations upon which law and order rest in any country in the world. But the people of this country believe—and they know in Russia quite well that the policy of Lord Beaconsfield has met the free assent, expressed in Parliament, of the people of England—that the Government cannot depart from that foreign policy without ignoring the first principles upon which they have been returned to power, and which they still believe the people of this country mean to support. (Cheers.) But I believe the result of our policy will lead to peace, liberty, and prosperity. But, gentlemen, if men attain to power whose object it is to reverse and upset everything that has been done within the last few years, and whose policy it is to speak of England as a little island too feeble to perform its responsibilities, too weak to hold that position in the world which it has hitherto upheld—if such men as these attain to power, I believe that you have not only the danger of war, but you have the danger of this country sinking into a condition which no Englishman can contemplate without shame and humiliation. (Loud cheers.)

The Hon. E. Stanhope, M.P., who was loudly cheered, said: No member of the Government who at the present moment has the duty cast upon him of addressing a meeting of his fellow-countrymen has any lack of topics upon which to address them. But I have great pleasure in selecting from among the subjects of that ferocious eloquence, the echoes of which from Scotland are still ringing in our ears—(laughter) —the subject of India—not only because I am more specially connected with that department, but because I have the honour of serving in it under the leadership of a man who is known and respected and loved in the West Riding of Yorkshire—I mean Lord Cranbrook. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, in the speech to which we listened this afternoon, the unfair and the inaccurate character of the statements of Mr. Gladstone with reference to English finance were fully exposed. If it were possible for me to do it before this immense audience, I could easily

show you that when he (Mr. Gladstone) came to deal with Indian finance his statements were no less inaccurate. (Hear, hear.) Don't be afraid, gentlemen. (Laughter.) When anybody in the House of Commons says he is going to talk about Indian finance, there is a disposition to go towards the door. But I ask your permission to give you one single instance, and remember this: It is not in the power of many people thoroughly to understand Indian finance, and therefore when a statesman of the experience of Mr. Gladstone addresses a meeting of his fellow-countrymen, it is his duty in the statements which he makes to influence public opinion to take reasonable care that those statements are accurate. Now, he suggests to you that the present Government has raised the expenditure of India by something like £10,000,000 a year. But if he had looked only at the other side of the account he would have seen that the receipts are increased almost in a corresponding proportion, and he would have found that almost the whole of the increase which had taken place, with the exception of something like a quarter of a million, is due first of all to changes in the form of account, and secondly, to the depreciation in the value of silver—(hear, hear) a matter wholly beyond the control of any Government,——and that, remember, gentlemen, in a year which he has specially chosen for comparison, and when we have to meet a wholly unexpected expenditure in relation to the war in Afghanistan. But I am not going to be tempted into any party recriminations upon the subject of Indian finance, because I protest against the notion which is now a little too prevalent in the Liberal party that capital ought to be made out of Indian finance. All our greatest statesmen of recent days have concurred in endeavouring to place questions relating to India as outside the sphere of party politics, and I remember very well that one of the most experienced of those statesmen, addressing us only this year in the House of Commons upon the subject, wound up an eloquent peroration by saying that he at any rate desired no such miserable gratification. That statesman was Mr. Gladstone. ("Oh, oh," and cheers.) And I appeal from the heedless rhetoric of the hustings to Mr. Gladstone speaking in the House of Commons under a due sense of responsibility, and I protest against an attempt being made to excite the feelings and alarm the jealousies of the people of India for the paltry purpose of

trying to gain a few votes in England. (Cheers.) Then, gentlemen, they are very fond of telling you that Indian finance is in a state of hopeless confusion. Now, don't believe a word of it. Indian finance has always received, and I hope always will receive, the greatest possible care and attention. (Applause.) But there is nothing—and I speak to you under a full sense of responsibility—in its present condition which need cause us any particular alarm. (Cheers.) Our silver difficulty has diminished; we have had in India a very excellent harvest; we have very largely diminished our expenditure in that country, and I look forward without any apprehension, in spite of the enormous war expenditure which of course we have to incur, to the budget of next March. And now, gentlemen, I have a word to say to you upon another attack which has been made upon us with reference to India. We have been reminded of two Acts which the Government of India has recently passed, one of which placed restrictions upon the free use and importation of arms and of explosives; and the other, which in consequence of seditious writing, imposed restrictions also upon the vernacular press of India. Both these Acts have recently been attacked by the great orator, Mr. Gladstone. Both of them have worked exceedingly well, however much we must all regret, as I certainly regret, the necessity for those Acts at all. But we can recollect, most of us, that no longer ago than the year 1870 another Government felt it to be its duty to pass an Act relating to another portion of the empire of a very stringent character, and in that Act were contained provisions, first of all for dealing with the press of the country, although it was written in the English language; and, in the second place, imposing very severe restrictions upon the possession and the use of firearms and ammunition. The Government that passed that Act was the Government of Mr. Gladstone, and the portion of the empire to which it applied was Ireland—(laughter and cheers)—and it is very difficult to understand why it is so wicked, so very wicked—(laughter)—for the Conservative Government to sanction Acts for India which the Government of the country declares to be necessary for the public safety, and which are analogous to those which Parliament in its wisdom has thought fit to pass for Ireland. I say, gentlemen, it is very difficult, but Mr. Gladstone has given us the reason, and it is this:—There are no snakes in Ireland—(laughter and cheers)—and there are snakes in India. But oh! how lamentable is the fact that

that great man should be urging a crowd of Hindoos to go out with blunderbusses to accomplish an object for which no firearms are required, instead of imitating the example of St. Patrick, who, if we are told aright, extirpated the same pest in Ireland by the simple power of his eloquence, and was canonised in consequence. (Cheers and laughter.) I have a few words to say to you on the subject—(Cries of "Give 'em a warm 'un," "Let 'em have it")—of the Afghan war, which was alluded to in this town by the Duke of Argyll—(hooting)—principally, as it seemed to me, for the purpose of accusing Lord Salisbury and Lord Lytton of falsehood, and of puffing his own book. (Laughter and cheers.) It is impossible for any one to speak on this subject without referring in terms of sympathy and approbation to the gallant band of our fellow-countrymen who are now contending against enormous odds in the neighbourhood of Cabul. We have every reason to believe, and all the latest intelligence tends to confirm that belief, that before very long we shall be able to re-establish our supremacy in Afghanistan—(hear, hear)—and the rising of the tribes that has taken place ought therefore not to cause us undue alarm, as it certainly ought not to cause us undue surprise. In the midst of a fanatical population it was impossible to suppose that some such event, to a greater or less degree, might not happen; but don't be misled into thinking that because the event has happened, because we have some difficulties to deal with, therefore our policy with reference to Afghanistan has broken down. Let us look for a few moments to its origin and its object. Why was it necessary at the present time to take any special precautions with relation to the north-western frontier of India? Well, it was this. The Ameer had become alienated from the British alliance, and was throwing himself into the arms of Russia. We were not afraid of any Russian military invasion of India, but as Lord Salisbury has well put it, we were apprehensive of a diplomatic invasion—an invasion commenced and then secretly and skilfully pushed forward until a result would be achieved which every statesman who has paid real attention to the affairs of India looks upon as most dangerous to the interests of this country—I mean the Russianisation of Afghanistan. To what extent that had proceeded we little knew till recently; but in the midst of that state of things it was suddenly announced that a Russian Mission, for a purpose avowedly hostile to this country, had arrived at Cabul. What

were we to do? We took the friendly and pacific step of saying that we desired also to send a Mission to Cabul. That Mission was rejected with insult before even it reached the territory of the Ameer, and our difficulty was what step was next to be taken. Could we in the face of India allow an insult of that description to pass without notice and revert to our former position? ("No, no.") We felt that we could not do that, and it was under those circumstances that war was originally declared. Mr. Gladstone attacks our policy from the beginning, and let us see what he says of it. He says, first of all, that it was a phantasmagoria. (Laughter.) That is a very hard word, and one which I have taken the opportunity of looking out in the dictionary—(cheers and laughter)—and I find that it means "the calling up of spirits or ghosts from the dead." (Continued laughter and applause.) But the Russian mission at Cabul was a very real fact, and there is pretty sufficient proof that Mr. Gladstone himself thought so, because he suggests as an alternative policy that we ought not to have made war on the Ameer of Afghanistan, but we ought to have made war upon Russia. Of course it was only one of his jokes—(loud laughter)—because he never suggests that we should make war upon or stand up against Russia, except upon occasions when there is no earthly object in doing so and, therefore, there is no chance of his advice being accepted. (Laughter.) But what object could we have gained by making war upon Russia? Could we have secured, by attacking Russia in Europe, our north-western frontier in India? Could we have avenged, in the sight of all the people in India, an insult put upon us, not by Russia, but by the Ameer of Afganistan? We felt that such a position was entirely absurd, and we entered—and nobody can regret more than I do the necessity—upon the war, which we hoped was completely terminated by the Treaty of Gundamuk and by the mission of poor Major Cavagnari. The Duke of Argyll, when speaking in this town, attacked that treaty altogether, and he said, "You are doing something against which you ought to have been warned by all history. You have been trying to do what you tried once before and failed to do. You have been trying to set up a puppet in Afghanistan." Now we did nothing of the sort. (Applause.) Yakoob Khan was nominated by his father, he was accepted by the people of Afghanistan, and we all know that at no very distant period from the present he was a man whose personal influ-

ence was in that country of the very greatest possible character. Well, it is quite true that we did desire and we did believe that the great objects of our policy in that country might be carried out by means of a friendly and independent ruler acting in alliance with us, but under our influence as to his foreign policy. That, unfortunately, we can hardly perhaps hope for now; but, nevertheless, the main principles upon which our policy has hitherto been founded remain altogether unchanged. Now, what were the principles upon which that treaty was founded? They were these: First of all, the necessity of excluding foreign influence from Afghanistan; secondly, the necessity of obtaining such a frontier for ourselves upon that country as would make it perfectly certain that British influence would not be excluded. And in accomplishing both these objects we desired to take upon ourselves as small an addition to our responsibilities as was possible, and especially by annexing fresh territory. We did not desire to annex fresh territory then; we have no desire to do so now. (Applause.) But in addition to those principles there is one that is not at all less important, and it is this, that in endeavouring to carry out those great objects and in making a settlement of this question, we shall endeavour, so far as is possible, to make that settlement a permanent one. (Applause.) We are not going to be led away by the specious arguments of those who tell us that we might get a miserable party advantage by winding up everything as quickly as we possibly can, and leaving the difficulty to be dealt with perhaps in a year or two by our successors. We have felt that in the true interests of this country and of India we are bound, in any settlement that we endeavour to make, to try and make a really and truly durable one. (Cheers.) I thank you most sincerely for the manner in which you have received me, and I shall not detain you any longer. ("Go on.") There is a story told of old Sir George Warrender. He was eating a haunch of venison, and said to his butler—"John, this will make a capital hash to-morrow." The butler replied—"Yes, Sir George, if you leave off now." (Laughter and cheers.) But, certainly, I should have been tempted to dwell upon some other topics, suggested in recent utterances in Scotland, but as it is rather late I will only endeavour to point out to you the result of those utterances. (Cheers.) Mr. Gladstone went to Scotland with the avowed object and intention, if he could, to turn out the Government of Lord Beaconsfield,

and—he has turned out Lord Hartington. (Prolonged cheers and laughter.) I remember we used to be told of a gentleman who ran two horses in a race—one to make the running for the other. But directly the race was begun the horse that was to make the running bolted, threw his rider, ran all over the course, still sticking to his stable companion, but so impeding his movements that he prevented all chance of his winning. (Cheers and laughter.) And certainly the leadership of the Liberal party is a subject of very curious speculation just now. (Renewed cheers.) I remember an old French story which described the Government of an imaginary kingdom. There were three Ministers, and the first was the Minister who talked without responsibility. That is Mr. Gladstone. (Cheers.) The second was the Minister who had a nominal responsibility but no real power; and the third was the Minister who kept in the background, but really pulled the strings of the policy, and that is Mr. Chamberlain. (Prolonged cheers and laughter.) We at any rate feel that when the great battle comes—and I don't care for one how soon it does come—(cheers)—we shall march to that battle united and hearty, under the leadership of Lord Beaconsfield—(loud cheers)—and we of the Government who speak to you, although we are conscious of many deficiencies, although we know how much we have fallen short of what our kind and sanguine friends may have desired of us, yet we are perfectly certain that when the day of battle comes you, the men of Leeds and Yorkshire—may I not say our friends in Yorkshire?—(cheers)—will strike a blow for England, her Empire, and her Constitution. (Enthusiastic cheering, the audience waving their hats, and those on the platform rising to their feet and applauding vociferously.)

MR. GLADSTONE'S PAMPHLET.

The following is a copy of a correspondence which has taken place between the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., and the Hon. R. Bourke, M.P.

Hawarden, December 24th, 1879.

Dear Mr. Bourke,—I find ascribed to you in a recent speech, words referring to me as follows—"a man who sent an emissary to Russia for the purpose of translating his pamphlet into the Russian language, with the view of augmenting the power of the war party in Russia." If the report is incorrect I am sorry to have troubled you; if otherwise allow me to ask for the authority on which you have made this statement.—Yours faithfully,

Hon. R. Bourke, M.P. W. E. GLADSTONE.

Coalstoun, Haddington, N.B., Dec. 28th, 1879.

Dear Mr. Gladstone, I think the report of that portion of my speech at Leeds which you are good enough to send to me, is correct. I am sure the passage expresses what I believed to be the case in October, 1876, a belief which I still entertain. I have never heard any competent authority, English or foreign, express a doubt that the appearance of Mr. Alexander in Russia as your agent for distributing your pamphlet in the Russian language was most unfortunate and injurious to the public interests, and that it was calculated to produce those effects which were, in fact, its actual sequence, viz., the increase in the number of the Russian Volunteers in the Servian army, the strengthening of General Tchernayeff's position, and the prolongation of the strife between Turkey and Servia which all the Powers, including Russia, were at that time earnestly endeavouring to terminate. I may also remind you that it was contemporaneously with these events that warlike preparations in Russia were announced in the newspapers. From these facts, and from the following extracts from the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* and the *Agence Russe*, I cannot entertain a doubt that Mr. Alexander's mission was calculated to augment the power of the war party in Russia, and did have that effect. I find in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* of the 8th of October, the following paragraph:—"We have lately announced that the pamphlet of Mr. Gladstone on the atrocities in Bulgaria has been translated into Russian. This translation has been made at the desire of Mr. Gladstone himself, who charged one of his friends, Mr. Alexander, to visit St. Petersburg with this object. On the 18th September Mr. Alexander was invited to take part at a sitting of the St. Petersburg section of the *Comité Slave de Bienfaisance*. On his arrival, the sympathetic stranger was welcomed by M. T. Phillippow. Mr. Alexander, on his part, responded to the address of the President of the Committee by the following speech, which has been published in our journals:—'I understand very well that is not of my own merits, but on account of the friendship with which I have been honoured by the great statesman of my country that I owe the flattering reception of which I find myself the object. I am only the dim shadow of that great man, but the humble rôle which I play, and which is permitted to me in your presence, will remain one of the most pleasant recollections of my life.'" I will not

trouble you with any more of the quotation. And in the *Agence Russe*, of October 10th, I read, "The Rev. Mr. Alexander, sent to Russia by Mr. Gladstone, has pronounced at this time a warm address, testifying the sentiments of esteem which the English nation professes for the Russian nation in this struggle against the oppression of the Christians." I need not point out to you the numerous expressions in the above which justified me in styling Mr. Alexander your emissary. His proceedings, so far as I know, have never been disavowed or disapproved of by you. In the absence, therefore, of any such disavowal or disapproval, I shall continue to hold that that portion of my speech at Leeds to which you have drawn my attention is a just and legitimate commentary on the recorded conduct of a public man. Should you, however, consider that I have done you any injustice, you are perfectly welcome to publish this letter, for which I am alone responsible.

I remain, very faithfully yours,

ROBERT BOURKE.

Hawarden Castle, Chester, Dec. 30th, 1879.

Dear Mr. Bourke,—I have to acknowledge your letter of the 28th. You have stated to the world as a matter of unquestioned fact, evidently in ignorance of the circumstances, that which is altogether without foundation. The pamphlet to which you refer was translated into a great many European languages, among them into Russian. I made no objection to any of those translations, but the translators were not thereby constituted my agents. The only difference, as far as I am aware, in Mr. Alexander's case, was that he, personally a stranger to me, applied for permission, and that I told him what most if not all of the others warrantably under the circumstances took for granted. I submit to you that it is not for the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with the unrivalled means of information which are provided for him, to charge upon a Member of Parliament as fact whatever statement he can gather from a foreign newspaper, even if he does not, as I think you have done, somewhat improve upon that statement. I need not say that I never saw or heard of these reports. I do not act upon your obliging permission to publish your letter. It appears to me to be for the person who has inadvertently fallen into error to correct it, and in this I do not doubt you will agree with me.

I remain, faithfully yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Coalstoun, Haddington, N.B., Jan. 3rd, 1880.

Dear Mr. Gladstone,—I should not trouble you with another letter were it not for the last sentence of your reply to mine, in which you say—"It appears to me to be for the person who has inadvertently fallen into an error to correct it, and in this I do not doubt you will agree with me." I am quite willing that the explanation of what you consider to be my "error" should be made as public as the statement that I made at Leeds. In accordance, therefore, with the duty you impose upon me, I have sent the correspondence to the London papers.

I remain, very faithfully yours,

ROBERT BOURKE.

Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.

IRISH ATROCITIES.

SPEECH

BY

MR. J. E. GORST, Q.C., M.P.,

In the House of Commons, April 4th, 1882.

MR. GORST, in rising to call attention to the proceedings at the recent Assizes in Ireland, and to the evidence thereby afforded of the increase of agrarian crime and the general collapse in the administration of justice, and to ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they proposed to take in relation thereto, said it was of the utmost importance that the truth about the present state of things in Ireland should be known, not only to the members of Her Majesty's Government, but to the House and to the country. The facts which he intended to lay before the House were, he ventured to say, new to the great majority of members, and, at all events, to the majority of the people of this country. The first step towards the inauguration of a better policy in Ireland was to obtain full and accurate information of the state of things in that country, to look at the facts fairly in the face; and if the supporters of Her Majesty's Government had been for the last 18 months living in a "fool's paradise," the sooner they got out of it the better for themselves and for the country. Now, the facts he was about to adduce rested on the best of all evidence—namely,

THE STATEMENTS OF THE JUDGES,

made not for political purposes, but in the discharge of their regular official duty, and from the sworn testimony of witnesses called in the Courts of Justice during the last Assizes. In county

LONGFORD,

Lord Justice Deasy found at the late Assizes 98 cases, as against 75 in the preceding year, and of these 98 cases three were cases of firing at the person, nine of arson, 13 of malicious injury to property, five of obtaining forcible possession, and six of stealing cattle. The Judge said that in a few cases only was the Crown able to bring forward any evidence. In county

CLARE,

on March 7, Mr. Justice Barry said that there extensively prevailed a spirit of insubordination, and lawlessness manifested itself in crime and outrage. There was an absence, not of crime, but of criminals being made amenable. In that county there were 356 cases of agrarian outrage, as against 127 in the preceding year; but as this latter number represented the crime of four months only, while 356 was the number for eight months, the Judge corrected his state-

ment by saying that the proper comparison would be between 356 and 254 outrages. In

LEITRIM,

Chief Justice May found some signs of improvement, but one of the cases brought before him was that in which Keegan, an old man, had been attacked and half roasted alive. The prisoner pleaded "Not Guilty." The sworn evidence of Michael Keegan, who was described as a feeble-looking old man, was as follows:—

"I reside near Cloone. I remember the 12th of August last, on which day I was working for Mr. Houston, a land bailiff. About four o'clock next morning the door of my house was knocked in, when I heard a voice calling on me to come down. I went down into the kitchen, where I saw ten or eleven men with both guns and pistols in their hands. They put me on my knees and kicked me several times. The barrel of a pistol was two or three times thrust into my mouth. I then got a blow from a gun on the back, and was knocked down. The party then took the fire out of the fireplace and spread it on the floor. They then pulled me off my knees and put me over the burning coals. My shirt then caught fire. I then received a deep gash across the breast about seven inches long. I also received other wounds. My grandson, while I was over the fire, tried to tear off a portion of my burning garment, when he got a blow from one of the party which rendered him senseless. One of the party then said to him, 'What made you go to cut the meadows?'"

The Judge said it was a sad state of things that such a crime should be committed in any community. The jury then retired, and after an absence of some hours were discharged on their stating that there was not the slightest probability of their agreeing to a verdict. In the county of

LOUTH,

Mr. Justice Lawson commented on the increase of offences committed with a view to prevent people paying their rents, and observed that no persons were made amenable for those offences. In the great county of

TIPPERARY,

Mr. Justice Fitzgibbon observed that in the North Riding there were 159 agrarian crimes this year, against 75 in the preceding year, an increase of more than double, and that in the South Riding there were 230 agrarian crimes, against 106 in the preceding year, the proportion being considerably more than double. Therefore in the whole of the county the total number of agrarian crimes in the present year was 389, against 181 in the previous year. The Judge noticed not only the increase in the actual number of offences, but the alarming character of the increase of the more serious kinds of crime—for instance, the wilful injury, killing, and maiming of cattle, which had grown from 13 in the preceding to 48 in the present year; firing with intent to murder; breaking into dwellings at night, which had increased from 20 last year to 63 in the present year, or more than threefold; and the grand jury, at the close of

the Assizes, made a formal presentment to the Court, in which they said :—

" The grand jury wish to draw the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the alarming increase of the so-called boycotting in the South Riding of the county Tipperary, whereby men of all classes are affected, and obstructed in their legitimate business, isolated, and deprived of the very necessaries of life. The grand jury respectfully suggest the necessity of making boycotting a malicious injury, giving the sufferer the usual claim for compensation, or stamping it out by such other measures as Her Majesty's Government may deem fit. They would further suggest that the cost of the extra police in disturbed districts should be placed on smaller areas than counties, and also that compensation be given for injury to the person."

He made no comment on these things, because in cases of the kind comment was needless. In the county of

WESTMEATH,

Mr. Justice Fitzgerald said that there were 86 criminal offences against 84 in the previous year, and that in the whole 86 evidence was forthcoming only in two cases of a petty character. In the county of

LIMERICK,

Baron Dowse said that, leaving out of consideration the Winter Assizes altogether, he found that 315 criminal offences had been specially reported to the police, against 244 in the preceding year; that out of the 315 cases there were 246 in which offenders were not known, and there were some 300 persons who refused to give information to the police or make any deposition. In only 65 out of the 315 cases were there any persons charged. In the county of

KILKENNY,

Judge Harrison found 50 cases against 39 in the preceding year. In

KING'S COUNTY,

Chief Justice Morris said that there were 184 serious cases, of which 83 were threatening letters; and as they had heard a good deal in that House about such letters, perhaps he should be excused if he read the observations of the learned Judge. Chief Justice Morris said :—

" Since the last Summer Assizes no less than 184 serious cases are reported to me on the list furnished to me by your county inspector, a gentleman with whom I have been long and favourably acquainted. That list contains no less than 83 cases of threatening letters—ranging over every species of business that it is almost possible to conceive—threatening to murder, threats of violence, threats of various kinds connected with the various relations of life that must exist in a large and busy community. Gentlemen, sometimes persons of great courage—one of whom I do not profess to be, having merely ordinary fair courage—persons of great courage sometimes suggest that they do not mind threatening letters at all. Well, possibly, when these threatening letters are not seen to be accompanied by any effects, a person may, to a certain extent, possibly

arrive at such a conclusion; but when I find that since the last Assizes no less than seven persons have been fired at with, apparently, intent to murder, at various times, and in various places—when two of the persons so fired at are members, if not of your grand jury, at least of other grand juries—when, in four cases out of seven, the person fired at was more or less wounded—in three cases they escaped altogether—when I add as a commentary upon these threatening letters that there have been 46 cases of burning houses, four of hay and other property, that there have been various cases of other malicious injuries to property and of firing into houses with intent to intimidate—when all these are remembered, I can only sum up this melancholy list by stating that it amounts to 184 cases." In the county of

SLIGO,

Judge Ormsby found 138 agrarian crimes against 97 in the preceding year. In the county of

CAVAN,

Mr. Justice Fitzgerald found 158 cases against 125 in the previous year. The offenders in 100 of these cases had not been made amenable. There had been 15 or 16 cases of successfully taking away arms, and hardly any of them had been discovered. In the

QUEEN'S COUNTY,

Judge Fitzgerald found 62 cases, against 21 in the preceding year. There were 26 of threatening letters, two of murder, two of letters threatening absolutely to murder—letters of a very dangerous character—two of firing at the person with a view to murder, and two of assaulting dwellings at night; and the learned Judge especially called attention to a most atrocious case, the murder of a man named Martin Rogers. He said: "The lamentable occurrence took place on the 3rd of December last. It was one characterised by great audacity. It took place in a populous neighbourhood, between 12 and 1 o'clock on the 3rd of December last, near Rathdowney, on the borders of Kilkenny. The unfortunate murdered man had local knowledge—he had been clerk to an eminent solicitor—here. He had gone to reside in Dublin to pursue his vocation there till he was induced to come down here on the 2nd of December last to serve four writs in this county, as the local process-servers could not be prevailed upon to do so. This young man came down to serve these writs, which were not ejectments, but were intended simply to enforce payment of rents. He was a small infirm young man. He had lost the use of the right arm. His very helplessness ought to have been his defence, for he was incapable of defending himself. He was offered the protection of the constabulary, and his reply was, 'I know the county well; I do not need protection.' He went and delivered a copy of the writ at each of the four houses. One of the parties charged is a person named Bergin, who is accused of being active in the murder. His house, I collect from the informations, was the last served—the murder, at all events, took place very near his house. This murder must have been witnessed by a

number of individuals in the locality. I daresay any one of them could tell every circumstance connected with it, but one of the lamentable features of the case is that no one in the vicinity of the occurrence will give the hand of the law the slightest assistance. On the other hand, those who have been examined have obviously endeavoured to mislead justice. I gather from that that there is not only sympathy with crime, but that there is a disposition to defend the murderers. The evidence to come before you will be that of a man who represents that he was actually passing up at the time of the murder. He says he saw two men coming from the one direction and three from the other, and that, being alarmed, he concealed himself behind a ditch where he was not seen, and from that position he deposes that he saw the murder perpetrated. He says that the five persons accused were the persons engaged in the murder. He described in a graphic manner what occurred—says that the young man cried for assistance and for mercy, and then he said he heard no more. The body of the murdered young man lay on the roadside. The police came and found his head literally battered to pieces. They found there stones with which the murder had been perpetrated. The medical man made a *post mortem* examination, and he found several extensive fractures of the head, which had been battered. The unfortunate young man had endeavoured to ward off the blows ; but so outrageous was the assault made on him, that they fractured his arm in more than one place, and also the fingers of his hand." Perhaps the House would remember a similar case of murder at Lough Mask, which must have been witnessed by several persons, not one of whom came forward to give evidence ; and it was not until three weeks after the murder that the place where the bodies were deposited was discovered. In county

KERRY,

Mr. Justice Barry found there were 379 agrarian cases reported by the police, a decrease upon the number of the preceding year, but the Judge thought proper to call special attention to two cases which had happened since the list was made out, the details of which, he said, would horrify Christendom. An armed party visited a person suspected of having paid his rent or committed some other offence against some secret organisation. The man was shot dead, his wife had her thigh shot away, and a poor girl who struggled to protect her father was beaten and injured in a most savage manner. It was, said the Judge, a most humiliating thing for an Irishman who loved his country to have to state these occurrences in open court. Within the last two nights, he continued, another man was shot through the window of his house because he was suspected of having paid his rent. At the same Assizes a very remarkable case was heard, in which a man named Jeremiah Mahony was charged with posting threatening notices. The prisoner was caught, as it were, red-handed. There was not the slightest doubt about the case. The jury returned into court, and stated that if they were locked

up for three days they would not agree, and then one of the jury, Mr. A. E. Herbert, intervening, complained that one of the jurors said if kept for a week he would not agree to a verdict. Since the report of that case Mr. A. E. Herbert had been murdered, his flocks slaughtered, and at his burial the people would not provide a rope to lower his coffin into the grave, and so violent was the revenge against him, that it was feared his grave would be outraged. In

ROSCOMMON,

Chief Justice Morris found 84 cases, against 30 in the preceding year, and he called attention to a horrible case of murder, where a man, named Brennan, was shot dead in his own house; and what was his offence? It was that his brother was supposed to have paid his rent. The Judge described this case as frightfully horrible. Another man was assassinated because he was called upon to collect the seed rate. What must be the state of feeling among the lower orders in Ireland when men were assassinated for such things? In the county of

CORK,

Baron Dowse stated that there were no less than 375 cases reported to the constabulary, including 45 cases of threatening to murder, 32 cases of arson, and 2 of murder, besides cases of malicious injury, treason-felony, unlawful assembly, and riot. In the West Riding of Cork there were 372 cases very much of the same class of offences; and out of the whole number of 659 cases in the two Ridings, only 21 were not of an agrarian character. In

DONEGAL,

Lord Justice Deasy found 105, against 45 in the preceding year. In almost every case tried, the prisoner was acquitted or the jury discharged without finding a verdict. In

MAYO,

there was a clear case in connection with cutting off the ears of a man named Nolan. Nolan himself gave evidence as well as his wife and son; but the prisoners set up an *alibi* in each case, and they were all acquitted. Prisoners sometimes behaved in an extraordinary manner. There was a case in which Patrick Fahy was indicted for assaulting a process-server heard at the Mayo Assizes. Baron Dowse said there was no doubt the prisoner was guilty, but that if he pleaded guilty he would be allowed to stand out on his own recognizance. After consultation with the solicitor for the prisoner, the counsel for the defence said they would leave the case to the jury. Baron Dowse said that was the first time he ever heard of such an offer being refused. But the jury, without leaving the box, found the prisoner "Not Guilty," and he was discharged. Not only was the disease apparently on the increase in those counties where it had existed before, but it seemed to be spreading, because he found in the county of

LONDONDERRY,

where the Land League was not very powerful, Baron Fitzgerald

found 49 cases as compared with 15 in the preceding year, and in more than half of these cases, a majority of them being cases of malicious destruction of property, no person had been arrested or made amenable. In

WICKLOW,

the cases were 69, against 40 in the preceding year, and Mr. Justice Harrison called attention to the increase, and said that Wicklow had hitherto been free from the disease. Allusion had been made on a former occasion to the observations of Mr. Neligan, one of the most efficient Criminal Judges in Ireland, who, at a trial in the King's County, finding that the jury would not agree in one of the plainest and simplest cases that had ever come before him, said the system of trial by jury was on its trial, and that if a King's County jury could not agree after such evidence, it had been reduced to an absurdity. One of the jurors then said :—

" Your Honour, if I had to sit here until 12 o'clock at night, I would not agree."

Whereupon Mr. Neligan said :—

" Then trial by jury is reduced to an absurdity. If you cannot come to a decision, I must decline to try any more criminal cases ;" and, addressing the Crown Solicitor, he directed him to send them to the Assizes. In

GALWAY,

Lord Chief Justice May said the number of outrages reported was 360 against 335 for the preceding year, and that in only 30 cases had persons been made amenable to justice. The Lord Chief Justice, furthermore, in his address to the grand jury, said : " There was no doubt the country was in an unsound and disorganised state, but he trusted the powers of this great empire would be so exercised as to put a stop to a condition of things that was a disgrace to any civilised community." He had strictly confined himself to the statements of the Judges and the evidence of sworn witnesses ; but he could not help referring to a recent case, which every member of the House must have read with horror, as confirming the impression made by the history of the recent Assizes, in which an innocent lady, resident in Dublin, when on a visit to her brother-in-law in Westmeath, was shot dead on Sunday when returning from church. While there could be no doubt as to the deplorable condition of Ireland, there might be a difference of opinion as to how far the evil was due to the policy pursued by the Government. In connection with that question, a speech delivered in that House by the hon. member for Tipperary (Mr. Dillon) possessed a peculiar significance. It was delivered, he might say, at the time when the Chief Secretary for Ireland shadowed forth in somewhat ambiguous phrases the policy of mingled coercion and conciliation pursued by the Government for the past 18 months. " The statement which they had heard from the Chief Secretary for Ireland," said Mr. Dillon, " was a new and remarkable departure from the line of policy pursued by the Government. . . . . He only promised protection to the Irish tenant in the event of circumstances

arising which would cause him to introduce a Coercion Act. He said that it was only when there was a prospect of disturbance he would bring in such a measure, but he had forgotten that it might be the duty of Irish members to their constituents to get up such a condition of affairs as would force the right hon. gentleman to give the other Act which he had promised, even if he had to pass a Coercion Act. Never had such an extraordinary proposal been laid before Parliament by a Minister as to say that what he could not do before Parliament rose he would do if his hands were forced in Ireland during the recess. . . . What use was there in putting a premium on disturbance?"—[3 *Hansard*, cclv. 2040.] Most people would consider that the policy of coercion and conciliation—coercion neutralised by conciliation, and conciliation neutralised by coercion—had failed. He understood the Chief Secretary for Ireland himself to admit that it had at least partially failed, and the distinction made by the right hon. gentleman was remarkable. He said the Coercion Act had failed to maintain law and order; but it had been successful in enabling them to destroy the power of Mr. Parnell and his associates, and the government they had thereby exercised over the Irish people. It was a strange confession that the partial success of the policy of the Government should have been due, not to the Land Act, but to the Coercion Act. Now, if the Chief Secretary for Ireland were in his place he would probably reply by saying he should be very much obliged if the House would tell him what to do. The Prime Minister took a more accurate view of his duties and responsibilities. He would admit that a private member had fulfilled his duty in laying the facts of the case before the House. It was no part of his duty to make any suggestions to the Government as to what measures they should adopt to combat an evil which was described by Lord Chief Justice May as a disgrace to civilisation. He had no desire to draw the Government into hasty explanations. He did not expect an immediate answer to the question of what policy they were now going to pursue in Ireland. The matter was urgent; but everyone would willingly give the Government the Easter Recess to think over it and mature their plans. He believed, however, that as soon as Parliament re-assembled after the Easter Recess the country would expect from the Government some clear declaration of their Irish policy—some declaration which would not be made in the ambiguous language of the Chief Secretary for Ireland when he thought aloud in that House; but in the shape of clear and well-defined measures which the Government would lay on the table of the House, and to which they would ask the assent of Parliament. Unless the Government pursued some course of that kind, and made some proposal to cope with the terrible state of things in Ireland which he had described, he thought everyone would admit that they had not done their duty either to the House or to the country.

SPEECH

OF THE

MARQUIS OF SALISBURY

K.G., P.C., D.C.L.,

AT STRATFORD,

May 24th, 1882.

Chelmsford:
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MDCCCLXXXII.

sermons may now be preached. There never was a time in which that strength and courage were more necessary. Some persons may feel that in the present position of the Conservative Party there is something to discourage them, and to diminish the good courage that is recommended to you. In the House of Commons you see that you are heavily outnumbered ; but do not attach to that circumstance more importance than it deserves. People, when they talk of a great revolution in English opinion, and of the decision of the English nation as manifested at the last Election, little think of or recollect the very small number of votes by which that vast change was made. [Hear, hear.] These large majorities in the House of Commons—what do they really represent? Do they represent a violent revolution in the national will as compared with the spirit that prevailed in the last Parliament? It is a matter as to which everyone may satisfy himself who chooses to refer to figures, but it is a matter of fact that so close were the contests in many places that little more than 2,000 men turned the scale at the last Election in Great Britain. You will find that to be the case when you examine the figures, and so, when I am told that the Government derived great encouragement from the recent Elections for Cornwall and the North-West Riding of Yorkshire, I can only envy the temperament which finds solace in so little. [Cheers.] If the Liberal vote has fallen off in the rest of the island to the same extent, Mr. Gladstone no longer represents the majority of the people. You see, therefore, upon what a close issue the balance turns ; you see what a heavy duty, what a great responsibility rests upon Registration Associations. It is by the work of each Association—I might almost say by the work of each individual man—that the mighty issue will be again decided ; and remember that the progress of events to which I have just referred has placed an enormous responsibility on the constituencies of this country. Their power is enormous, and the problems they have to face are as difficult at this moment as any that have ever confronted the governors of mankind. The great Irish Question has been already alluded to by Colonel Makins. It is one of such proportions as to dwarf every other, and it is practically to that alone that the attention of the country is devoted. The settlement of that question depends not on Parliament or on Statesmen, but on the temper and the stern will of the constituencies themselves. [Hear, hear.] We have a glorious history to look back upon ; and on the whole, find what fault you will with individual acts, take what exception you like to the policy of the country at a particular period, it is a splendid inheritance that has been handed down to you. The policy of England in the past has made an empire of which the world has no equal, and it is for you to determine whether you will sustain

it by wisdom and courage, or let it drop through folly and feebleness. [Cheers.] Now, you know the state of things presented to you in Ireland. That Ireland should be part of the political system of the country, that it should follow the guidance of the majority of the people of the country is a geographical necessity of our position from which, however much a man might wish it, it is impossible to escape. On the other hand, you must assume it as a fact that there are a certain number, a considerable number, of malcontents in that Island, who desire nothing better than to break their connection with Great Britain ; and though I believe them to be a mere minority, there is no doubt at this moment that they are sustained and supported by the co-operation, or at least by the acquiescence, of the majority of the Irish people. It is not that these last are averse to English rule, but, like the majority of men in all countries, their interest in politics is not as keen as their interest in private affairs. They will follow and support any Government that they think will be strongest and will enable them to reap the fruits of their industry. But they must be certain that it is really the strongest, and they have not such devotion to the English Government as would induce them, for the mere pleasure of supporting it, to expose themselves and their families to the ingenious tortures invented by the Land League. [Hear, hear.] They will not for the sake of the English Government have their cattle mutilated, their wives carded, their houses burnt down, and their families murdered; and, if they find the English Government weak, they will support that Government, whether acknowledged or not, which proves itself the stronger of the two. That is the problem you have to deal with ; its gravity is confessed by the Coercion Bill now before the House. But why is it that a Liberal Government, professing a horror of all Coercion Bills, should be compelled now to have recourse to this odious machinery which its Conservative opponents were not obliged to employ? Do not understand me to say that a Coercion Bill is not necessary ; I believe it is necessary ; at all events I should be sorry to take the responsibility of refusing to the Executive the powers which it thinks it necessary it should possess. But I want you to ask yourselves why it is that Ireland has come to this condition, and why this terrible necessity is laid upon the Government and upon Parliament ? With respect to Ireland more than any other country, we above all things require that our information should come from persons thoroughly acquainted with it and with its administration. Our difficulty ordinarily is that the permanent servants of the Government, who know the facts most fully, have their mouths sealed, but here we have the testimony of one whose mouth has been, so to speak, unsealed by death. I do not know whether you noticed a letter addressed

to the *Standard* by Mr. Staples, an Irish Magistrate, a few days after the Dublin tragedy. He says :—"About a year ago I had occasion as a Magistrate to see Mr. Burke on business connected with the state of the country. I told him what I thought, lamented the troubled and dangerous state into which we were drifting, and his answer was, 'We may thank Mr. Gladstone for it all.'" [Cheers.] Now that is the solution to which, I think, a calm examination of the recent connection of this country with Ireland will lead every one who devotes his attention to it. It would be ridiculous to say that Mr. Gladstone has consciously or intentionally brought about this result. Of course, I am only challenging the prudence and wisdom of the measures he has adopted. [Hear, hear.] The state of the case, to borrow a voice from the hostile camp, was stated by Mr. Goldwin Smith, to be this—that "for two years past we have had no Government of Ireland"—[hear, hear]—and I might extend that statement so far as to say that during the years in which Mr. Gladstone has had the conduct of affairs we have had no Government of Ireland. Now, what does Government mean? Of course, Government must be conducted on principles of justice and impartiality; but it is, in the first instance, its business to be a terror to evil-doers. If the Government is to be effective, especially in the case you have in Ireland of a number of people who are under your rule, but who are profoundly dissatisfied with it, your only hope of peace and quiet of fulfilling the first duty of a Government, is that men should look upon it as an instrument for awarding praise or blame to the well-deserving or the guilty, and should believe in its justice, its firmness, its consistency. [Hear, hear.] The vital error of Mr. Gladstone's policy has been, however unintentionally, this—that he has made his administration of Ireland an instrument wherewith to purchase support of the Liberal Party in Parliament, and has passed his legislative measures so as to buy off the outrages and crimes of those who thought in this manner to force his conduct. [Cheers.] Four times has Mr. Gladstone preached that lesson to the Irish people. You know he has preached it about the abolition of the Irish Church, when he spoke of the outrages in Clerkenwell bringing that question "within the range of practical politics." [Hear, hear.] He thus acknowledged that a measure which up to that date the Liberal and Conservative Parties alike had rejected by large majorities, which was repudiated by every responsible statesman in the country, became, after these outrages had had their effect on the Liberal leaders, not only within the range of practical politics, but a measure which the whole power of the Liberal Party was used to pass. [Cheers.] Well, then, I go from that measure to what happened two years ago. Lord Beaconsfield dissolved the late Parliament, warning the people of this country of the

struggle impending over them—[hear, hear]—warning them that an effort was being made to disintegrate the Empire, which would be more dangerous than pestilence and famine; but the result of that warning was that the Liberal Party threw themselves into the hands of the Irish voters. They were brought into power by the help of the ambiguous promises to which they have not been able to give any definite meaning and sense—[A VOICE: "Lord Ramsay"]—exactly, such promises as those made by Lord Ramsay—[laughter]—and by the votes of the Irish voters. As payment for that support the Land Act was introduced, of which I will not discuss the individual provisions, but it may be described in this simple phrase—that it was a measure for the transfer of a quarter of the property of the landlords, or what had been till then regarded as the property of the landlords, to the tenants who were in the occupation of the land. [Cheers.] What is more of importance to my argument, it was a measure directly in the teeth of the assurances by which Mr. Gladstone had forced upon Parliament, and passed the Act of 1870—the direct reversal of those principles of free contract which he had then laid down in the most emphatic terms were to be our permanent guide. We know from Mr. Chamberlain that the Land League was looked upon by the Government as a very useful auxiliary in passing the Land Act, and until the Land Act was passed no material effort was made to break up the Land League. The Coercion Act, compared to which the Acts under which their predecessors had found it possible to maintain peace were mild—which was obtained shortly after the Liberal Government came into office—was not made use of; no application of its coercive powers was made against the leaders of the Irish movement until the moment the Land Act was passed, and then Mr. Gladstone commenced his third lesson to the Irish malcontents. He shut up Mr. Parnell and his associates in Prison because they opposed the operation of the Land Act; and from that moment the contest commenced—a contest of endurance on one side, and of indiscriminate imprisonment on the other. Need I tell you how that contest ended? With respect to the question of an understanding or a compact my mind is bewildered; I do not know what meaning to attach to terms, but my impression is that if Mr. Parnell had been an elector and Mr. Gladstone had been a candidate, and Mr. Parnell, not knowing the least of Mr. Gladstone and having no good intentions towards him, had said, "I intend to give you my vote," and thereupon Mr. Gladstone had presented him with £10—[laughter]—my impression is that an Election Judge—they are a very prejudiced race of mortals—would have said, "There has been a compact and an understanding there." [Cheers.] What I wish you to remember is that compacts and understandings between

Governments and Members of Parliament are not of sufficient rarity to excite any unreasonable remark; but what has drawn attention and deep condemnation to this transaction is, in the first instance, the extraordinary efforts made to conceal it, and, in the second place, the manner in which the Government used the power intrusted to them by Parliament for letting out or keeping in prison subjects of the Queen. They used that power in favour of Mr. Parnell, after having received from Mr. Parnell an assurance that he would co-operate with a Liberal Government in passing Liberal measures. [Cheers.] Mr. Parnell said as plainly as words can say, without brutally putting down the fact, "Let me out, and I will go into the Liberal lobby." [Hear, hear.] The important point is this, that this man with whom this compact was made, and on whose behalf the powers given by the Legislature were exercised, was in prison on a charge of treasonable practices. One of two things must be true. Either at the moment before he was let out there was no ground for the charge made of treasonable practices, and in that case he was the most deeply-injured of men, or else when he was let out without having given any security that the treasonable practices with which he was charged should cease, Mr. Gladstone was bartering the interests of the Empire for Parliamentary advantage. [Loud cheers.] Now we come to the fourth lesson that has been given to the Irish malcontents, and it has been given quite recently. I do not think that the nature of this Arrears Bill is really present to the minds of the English people. I am not blaming the House of Commons for having accepted it. I quite see the difficulty of refusing to entertain the consideration of such a measure when proposed by the Executive Government. I wish you to look at it merely as a lesson which Mr. Gladstone gives to the malcontents in Ireland with whom he has to deal. What is the Arrears Bill? It is a Bill for paying other people's debts, and paying them out of the funds to which those people have no claim. The advocates of the Government tell you that there will not be much to come out of the Consolidated Fund, and that it will nearly all come out of the unhappy Irish Church Fund. I should rather demur to a measure for devoting a fund which originally had a different destination to purposes such as these; but let that pass. What I wish you to centre your attention upon is the proposal to pay the debts of the Irish tenant-farmers out of the Consolidated Fund. The Consolidated Fund does not make the money which is in it; the money has to come from somewhere, and that money comes from the pockets of the rest of the community. I do not know the exact amount of money that will have to come from the Consolidated Fund, though I look upon the prophecies from the Treasury Bench upon the matter with considerable suspicion. I

cannot help recollecting the prophecies current when the Education Act was passed. We were told then in the most emphatic manner that it could not exceed a threepenny rate; in most places it has been more like a sixpenny rate, and in some places a shilling rate. [A VOICE: "It's 8d. here."] There are other parts, I believe, in Essex where they would be glad to get off for 8d. I think it would be much more reasonable to expect that where it is the interest of Irish tenants to pull one way, and it is only the interest of a few officials to pull the other way, more will be drawn from the Consolidated Fund than Her Majesty's Government are at present willing to contemplate, and that two millions and-a-half would be considerably below the mark. What does a million and-a-half mean? I believe it means something like 1d. on the Income-tax. Is it a satisfactory reflection that everyone who pays Income-tax in this country, in addition to the other burdens of the time, which are not light, will have to pay an additional 1d. in the £ in order to pay the debts of the Irish tenants? You may be told that they were seriously distressed in 1878 and 1879, but did the sun refuse to shine in 1878 and 1879 in Ireland alone? I believe that there are parts of this country which have suffered more deeply from the adverse seasons than any part of Ireland. [Hear, hear.] If I mistake not, I stand now in a county that has been far more seriously tried than any part of Ireland, and on what principle of justice is the money of the people of Essex to be taken to pay the debts of the Irish tenant farmer, while the tenant farmer of Essex has been left to face his ruin as best he may? [Cheers.] It is true that things are unjust in Irish legislation. I think it was unjust to Disestablish and to Disendow the Irish Church in the way in which it was done; I think it was unjust to take away a quarter of the landlord's property and give it to the tenants; but this injustice is not precisely the point to which I wish to direct your attention. The point is that in each of these four cases the Irish tenant has been taught by the powerful preaching of facts—the most powerful kind of preaching there is—that outrage will obtain from the English Government concessions which can be obtained in no other way, and that obedience to the law is not so profitable as breaking the law—[loud cheers]—that the commission of a series of agrarian crimes, which have now for so long disgraced the country, is repaid by the English Government by handing money from the Irish Church, from the pockets of the Irish landlords, and from the pockets of the English taxpayers to those who have committed the outrages, in order that they may be kind enough to commit them no longer. [Cheers.] Is that Government? Can you imagine that any Government could succeed on those terms? If you had the government of a regiment, of a ship, of a workshop, if you made it your rule of action

that you would reward those who broke the law and not those who kept it, do you imagine your government would be respected? [Cries of "No."] Depend upon it that it is a mistake to think that this terrible problem of Ireland arises because of the evils that exist in Ireland itself. It is a symptom of the general disease of the body politic—the disease, the symptoms of which show themselves at the extremities, is really at the heart. It is the heart, the Government in England, that causes all the troubles which you have to fight in Ireland. No matter what your local treatment may be, no matter what your concessions, or at whose expense they are made, no matter how many Churches you may disestablish, or how many landlords you deprive of their property, you will never cure the evil until you cure that feebleness, that want of principle, that want of consistency, which are here at the heart of the Government the cause of the disease under which we labour. [Loud cheers.] It is because the benefits which can be conferred by the Executive, or by legislative measures are treated by the Liberal Party as means of extending the political influence of that organization, and still more because when a Liberal Government is in office they are treated as coin which can be given away in instalments as blackmail to secure peace and bribe men to keep the law—it is because of this system of your Government at home that Ireland remains a disgrace to England. [Loud cheers.] Of course I shall be told, "Oh, those measures are just, and no matter what the state of things may be, no matter what reception may be given to them, justice must always be done." Our opponents seem to imagine that you have nothing to do but to use fine and lofty language, to confer a lofty character upon the conduct which it describes. They talk about justice and many more holy things than justice under the impression that by merely applying those epithets they give the characteristics which those epithets imply. Without discussing the measures in detail, it does seem to me a very suspicious kind of justice which is extracted inch by inch, as it were, by instruments of torture. That which one year is denounced as a thing the English Government can never give, the next year, when the requisite amount of pressure by means of outrage and murder has been applied, you are told is the one thing justice requires you should give to Ireland. When that process has been repeated four times, I imagine that a less suspicious person than an Irish peasant sees through the shallow pretence of justice. [Cheers.] If these things were just, they would have been granted long ago; if they are not just, no change in the circumstances of Ireland can make them so. No consideration of expediency can make it just to empty the purses of English taxpayers into the pockets of Irish tenants. Mr. Gladstone never spoke a truer word than when he said that we

were in the presence of a social revolution. Who has caused this revolution it is unnecessary to inquire, but you cannot compromise with it. Be as just, as merciful, as indulgent as you will before revolution has broken out, but when you are confronted with it face to face be sure that no transaction, no compromise, is possible. Either the Government will strike down the revolution or the revolution will strike down the Government. [Cheers.] I am told that it is a great object to pacify Ireland, and I heartily agree, and would earnestly co-operate in any measure having that end reasonably in view. But the position of Ireland towards England is not so utterly peculiar. Most nations have had the problem to deal with of having at their side some territory whose union with them was geographically and politically indispensable, but whose population was separate or even hostile. There have been great pacifications known to history, and we have had one in our own Island. Scotland, 140 years ago, was in many parts of the country almost as hostile to England as Ireland is now, but the pacification has long been complete. You have had a more modern and more striking instance in America, where the Confederate States took up arms against the Northern States. While the war lasted the bitterness was intense, but a few years have passed away and a thorough pacification has been effected. Why cannot that secret of pacification be applied to Ireland. In the cases I have mentioned the secret was this—that before pacification began, the victory of one side was complete. [Hear, hear.] On the morrow of the victory be as lenient as you please, but your first duty is to secure that there shall be no doubt in the mind of any mortal man with whom the victory rests ; and until that first preliminary condition of all reconciliation is achieved, your efforts at conciliation will be as futile as Mr. Davitt tells you they will be. [Cheers.] Now you see what task it is that lies before you. You see what it is that the constituencies of this country have to do, for it is to them only in this great crisis of the State that we are able with any confidence to appeal. The House of Commons silently and sullenly echoes the mandates of the Government—a Government feeble in every other part of its policy—strong and unflagging only in turning the screw by which the caucus is worked—[cheers]—and, therefore, the submission of the House of Commons is complete. It is only to you, with whom all power legitimately rests—to you, the electors of this country—that the noble task in this our country's hour of danger, devolves of restoring manliness to the Government and reality to English Power. [Loud and continued cheering.]

Gladstone came in April 29

80, Parl opened.

P. P. A. expired on June 1st

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SPEECH

OF THE

MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.,

AT LIVERPOOL,

APRIL 13, 1882.

PUBLISHED BY
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1882.

SPEECH

OF THE

MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.,

AT LIVERPOOL,

APRIL 13, 1882.

THE following speech was delivered at a great meeting of the Conservative party, held under the auspices of the Working Men's Conservative Association, in Hengler's Circus, Liverpool, on April 13, 1882, about 6,000 people being present. The Earl of Lathom presided.

The Marquis of SALISBURY, who was received with an outburst of cheers which lasted several minutes, said: My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—It is impossible to receive without emotion and without feelings of deep gratitude and sympathy the expression of the feelings and opinions of a meeting such as this; and it is impossible not to feel that a cause which is so supported has elements of enduring strength, which will resist the great dangers which at this time threaten our beloved institutions. (Hear, hear.) It is a time when we need all our efforts, when we need the conjunction of all the energy and the zeal that we can bring to support the cause, because it is a time when the enemies of our institutions spare no effort and no art to undermine them. (Applause.) The art which they are fondest of employing, and it is the greatest danger we have to confront, is the effort to persuade our fellow-subjects that our institutions and laws are defended by us, not in the interests of this vast community as a whole, but for the sake of any particular sectional portion of it which they term a class. But there is no institution which is more subject to this kind of attack than that with which my name has been connected to-night. Many efforts are made to persuade you that the House of Lords exists for some purpose separate and distinct from the welfare of the whole community. I need hardly tell you, for you know it well, that in these days any institution which was sectional in its character, and had not the interests of the whole community for its object, is necessarily doomed. (Hear, hear.) But I believe that the House of Lords is the last institution at which that reproach can be justly levelled. (Applause.) Undoubtedly, representative institutions—and I use

the term in the largest sense, as including both the House of Lords and the House of Commons—occupy a different position in the present day from what they occupied fifty or even thirty years ago. This great meeting is a proof of it. The people are taking a more direct interest in political business and assuming a more direct control over their representatives. England has representatives abroad just as the people have representatives in Parliament; but in proportion as the increase in the means of communication by telegraph and railway has brought the ambassadors that we have abroad more closely in connection with the Government at home, there has been some slight falling off in the importance and the authority of those distant functionaries. They are still representatives, but they are representatives of a power that can look more closely, more immediately, and more constantly into its own affairs. Something of the same kind has been taking place with respect to the two Assemblies that sit at Westminster. They are still, and they must necessarily remain, of the highest importance; but their importance has been diminished, just as the importance of our representatives abroad has been diminished, by the fact that the people throughout the country, meeting in meetings like this, can give an impulse to the public policy of the nation which is, in some degree, independent of the action of its representatives at Westminster. In that sense (and I do not think it is a subject to be deplored at all) the practical action of the people is superseding the indirect action of their representatives. But for the due exercise of their powers it is essential that they should be vested not in one Assembly, but in two. I hold that it is proved by all experience, and by the most evident reason, that it would not be safe for the people of England to entrust their affairs entirely to the management of one Assembly (hear, hear, and applause) elected once every seven years. You know how the present House of Commons was elected. It was elected in a great storm of popular excitement (hear, hear), raised by arts which I will not stop to characterise now. (Applause, and a Voice: "Give it them hot," and laughter and applause.) Were I to point your attention to the general character of the argument which I maintain, I would follow the advice which was given to me by my friend in the gallery to give it them hot. (Laughter.) There is not the slightest difficulty in the task. (Renewed laughter.) There has been too flagrant a contradiction between their promises and their performance; there has been too absurd a contrast between the tone with which they approached office and the tone they have maintained since they occupied it, to offer any impediment to anybody who might be inclined to undertake the duty of applying to them that process described by my friend in the gallery. (Laughter and cheers.) But what I want to point out to you is that whatever the arts and the representations by which that majority was obtained, this

particularity of feature marks the advent of the present Government to power—that no sooner were they there than the face of politics was entirely changed. The subjects which chiefly interested the nation became entirely different; new objects of interest arose, new dangers came up to be parried, and the mandate or commission, whatever it may have been, which was given by the electors of 1880 to their representatives, did not apply in the slightest degree to the most important and most burning of the questions which these representatives have since been charged to decide. (Cheers.) I hope I shall not be suspected for one moment of saying a word which could be twisted into anything disrespectful of a body for whom I have so sincere a reverence as the House of Commons. Its history, its magnificent achievements, the part it has borne in achieving the liberties of England, must for ever make it what it has been since our Parliamentary history began—the foremost body in the country. (Cheers.) But bear in mind that the House of Commons which we admire, whose achievements we value, and of whose labours we feel the blessing, was a House of Commons freely elected, freely debating, freely checked by a second Assembly. (Cheers.) What the Government of a House of Commons would be to which none of those free conditions applied might be a very different question. A House enslaved by the caucus (hear, hear) and muzzled by the *clôture* will be a very different body from that which has hitherto been the glory of English history. (Cheers.) The grounds upon which the representatives of the people were chosen, the principles upon which they were selected, will not justify giving absolute, unrestricted, and unchecked power to a single body during the long period of seven years; and the danger of doing so will be increased the more that body becomes subject to the machinery of party or to the dictation of a single mind. (Cheers.) Bear in mind that that is the danger to which we are all tending now; everything points to the increase of power in the hands of one individual, dictating Minister. (Cheers.) The competition of parties is so keen, the machinery of elections is so perfect, the power of applying pressure to individual members is so complete, that every year you will see our representatives, assumed to be independent, more and more exposed to the danger of being forced to fit their convictions into a single mould, provided by the man who happens to be at the head of the dominant party at the time. (Hear, hear.) This is the justification for a second Chamber. I do not enter into the question of what that second Chamber will be. Nobody who looks over the second Chambers of Europe will tell me there is any better model now in the world than the House of Lords. (Cheers.) I pass by that question, for I have heard no serious proposal to substitute any existing model for that which we have here. (Hear, hear.) But the existence of a second Chamber is justified by this fact, that unless you have it you will be driven to that system, full of inconvenience and full of difficulty, which will tend to disgust men with politics, which will

tend to drive independent persons from its profession—I mean the system of triennial or of annual Parliaments. That is the only substitute for a second Chamber which in the true interests of the people can be safely adopted. (Hear, hear.) It is the business of the House of Lords to watch over and see that no permanent and irrevocable change is made in the institutions of this ancient country until the people have had a thorough opportunity of informing themselves of the proposals which it is sought to carry into effect, and of giving a mature and solemn decision upon the subject. (Hear, hear.) I do not pretend that the House of Lords is free from many defects in its conduct, possibly in its constitution. The defect which I should be inclined to find in it is that sometimes it has possibly been too mindful of the opinion of the moment and of the pleasure of the House of Commons, and has not remembered sufficiently its first and paramount duty, to watch over the interests of the people of this country. (Applause.) And do not let me be told that it is inconsistent with this idea of its functions that it should be predominantly Conservative in its decision. Why, that is the very essence of its character, because the difference between a Conservative vote and a Radical vote is this—that when you have come to a Radcal decision—that is to say, when you have determined to destroy an institution and break a tradition (laughter)—you have taken a step which you cannot retrace. (Hear, hear.) When you have broken a work of art you cannot piece it together ; when you have cut down a tree you cannot put it up again. (Applause, laughter, and cries of " Gladstone.") Even when you have cut down a Upas tree you may find that you have made some mistake (applause) ; but when you have come, as the House of Lords may come, to a conservative decision, all that is done is to suspend the matter for the decision and solemn judgment of the people. Nobody can accuse the House of Lords of an attempt to set up any other opinion as supreme in this country instead of the opinion of the nation itself (applause); but the truth is that the cause of the animus with which the House of Lords is pursued is this very thing—that it is expected that it will perform this that I hold to be its primary duty. People who have got together a scratch and accidental majority (laughter and cheers), a majority based upon no principle (hear, hear), bound together by no true logical bond of cohesion (hear, hear), such a majority, it is greatly feared, might in the case of a dissolution not appear again. (Applause.) An intense desire is nourished that before that unique majority has disappeared it shall deal some telling, some crushing, some irreparable blow that no future course of action could undo, and it is greatly feared that when the proposal is made the House of Lords may possibly say, " No : this was not the ground on which the last election was decided, and we will not allow this thing to be done until the nation has been allowed to speak upon it." (Loud applause.) In so acting, I hold that the House of Lords will perform its true duty as

the second Chamber, its highest function as the last representative of the people of this country. (Applause.) Now there is a matter in which we have been exposed to special criticism, and that is the attitude which we have adopted with respect to recent legislation in Ireland. I am not saying for a moment that our proceedings have been above criticism. It is very easy—and I am not the least surprised at any who should think that we have allowed that legislation to go further than we ought to have done; but, at all events, that is not a fault of which any Liberal has the right to complain—but it is said that, animated by a purely class feeling, we have tried to hinder and embarrass the remedies which the all-powerful and all-wise Government (Oh!) have desired to apply to Ireland. Now in the first place, with respect to the Committee that was appointed early in this spring, I need hardly tell you that to inquire how a matter is going on is not to hinder its proceeding. (Hear, hear.) I do not imagine any man of business in this place would consider that he was unduly interfering with the action of his clerks if he asked to see their books (cheering), and to say that if he asked to see their books he would be committing some reprehensible act would, in this town, I think, be looked upon as something little short of lunacy. We had strong reason for believing that whatever the merits of the Irish Land Act might be, its provisions have not been carried out in a satisfactory manner. I may say that, so far as we have gone, there has not been anything in our conduct that could interfere with its beneficial action; but we have found that much of the machinery of the Irish Land Act is clumsy, and deserves the earliest attention of Parliament. But there was a curious circumstance which rather threw a light upon the kind of motive which animated that somewhat strange opposition with which we were met. I have no doubt that you must have thought it rather hard that a Ministry whose one ground of complaint, whose one topic of public utterance, was the difficulty of getting on with public affairs, should have deliberately thrown away a whole fortnight in discussing a perfectly useless and impracticable motion against the Lords. (Cheers.) If it was to frighten us, it was a very feeble performance. Our nerves endured that. (Laughter.) But there was another motive which I think I can indicate which may have operated in part. The first thing that happened to us was to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland to come and be examined before us. Now, you will understand that a Committee of either House can order any person to be examined before them except a member of the other House of Parliament, for the member of the other House of Parliament has a right, if he pleases, to refuse to be examined. I do not believe that that is a privilege of which use has often been made. I have always heard that Sir Robert Walpole, having spent a long life in corrupting the House of Commons (laughter), and being at last defeated, had a great terror that a Committee would be appointed, which I believe was appointed, to

examine the way in which he procured his majorities, and that therefore he induced the King to give him a peerage so as to give him the right to refuse to be examined by the Committee. (Laughter.) My impression is—but I speak under correction—that since the time of Sir Robert Walpole nobody has taken advantage of that privilege until we come to Mr. Forster. (Laughter.) It is a very odd thing that one of the accusations made against the Government—and an accusation of which I do not venture to say whether it was true or false, for I do not know—but an accusation confidently made was that they had appointed the Sub-Commissions of the Irish Land Act with a partisan intention—that is to say, they had appointed men of well-known opinions whose decision they could predict beforehand. You will remember what the structure of the Irish Land Act was. The Government made a great effort to provide in detail the mode of fixing a fair rent, but at last, despairing of doing so, or of inducing Parliament to take the view which they preferred, they passed a clause placing absolute power in the hands of the Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners of deciding what the rent of the tenants to the landlords should be, without laying down any kind of principle whatever to guide them in their decisions. Well, of course you will say that it was essential, under the circumstances, that men should have been appointed who were absolutely of fair minds, who leaned neither to one side nor the other, who had no prejudice in favour of the landlord, no prejudice in favour of the tenant (cheers); and therefore it was a very grave accusation indeed that in this particular case men had been appointed who had been on public platforms evincing their strong sympathy on one side of the question, and whose decisions, therefore, could have been prophesied beforehand. I will give you an example. When Mr. Gladstone was introducing the Land Act he compared the Irish landlords to the owners of slaves. Well, that was not a very pleasant comparison, and I should not have ventured to make it (cheers); but it reminded us of a certain fact that when the slave-owners were deprived of their property Parliament compensated them for what they had lost. (Cheers, and a voice, "His father.") Well, somebody here says "his father." I believe that was the fact (laughter and cheers); but, however that may be, what I want you to consider is what would his father say—what would anybody else have thought if the question of compensation had been handed over, not to an impartial or judicial man, but say to some frantic abolitionist, or say actually to some slave himself? (Hear, hear.) Would not that have been thought the height of scandalous injustice? Would not an appointment of that kind have been considered one of the gravest imputations that could have been possibly made against the Prime Minister of the day? I do not want to make imputations against the method in which they have exercised this particular patronage. In the course of the debates they have always expressed their entire willingness to submit to any Committee their own

particular actions; and yet when it came to the test, Mr. Forster revived this almost obsolete privilege in order to protect himself from examination. It does seem to me to give an explanation of the strange persistency with which the Government followed this suicidal policy of trying to prevent the House of Lords from following a perfectly legitimate inquiry. (Hear, hear.) Now I wish to say a word in respect to the allegation that our action in this matter has been the result of class prejudices. There is nothing that the Liberals are more fond of insinuating than that any defence of the rights of property is a question of class prejudice. I, on the contrary, maintain that not only is the defence of the rights of property a matter that concerns the whole community, but that it more truly concerns the struggling and the industrious class than those who have already secured a certain amount of accumulated property for themselves. (Hear.) Every industrious man hopes to lay aside something by which his old age can be supported, something by which those who are dear to him can live in case he should be taken away. The protection of that to him is infinitely more important than the mere protection which any law you can pass could take away from the very wealthy man. Take the case of Ireland. Mr. Gladstone talks of it being a question of "pompous titles," I think he said, and long rent rolls. It is not a question of long rent rolls. The few people who possess in Ireland long rent rolls I have no doubt will adequately take care of themselves, or, at all events, their sufferings, though they may be unjustly pressed, will not be comparable to the sufferings of those who have not got long rent rolls to protect them. (Hear, hear.) The people who are really to be pitied are the small proprietors (hear, hear), men who have laid by a certain amount of money by a life of labour and exertion, by industry, by enterprise, by success in their particular avocation. They are men who were induced by the deliberate action of Parliament to invest in Irish land. (Hear, hear.) Parliament did for Ireland what it did for no other part of the country; it offered to these men an indisputable title to land, it undertook to guarantee the goodness of the title of the land of which it disposed; and having lured these men by this pretence into investing in this security, which it offered to them as the results of the labour and self-denial of their whole lifetime, it comes down at the end, it invents a new law of property, it devises new theories never heard of before, and it cuts away a quarter, very often more, of the property which these men had accumulated ("Shame.") Do not tell me that the House of Lords, in showing jealousy for the robbery which has been inflicted on these unhappy and most injured class of men, has been actuated only by sympathy for the grievances of the very rich. (Hear, hear.) There is no ground on which these attacks on property can be shown to be to the interest of the whole community. The proceedings entirely destroy all confidence. Supposing (I am taking a case of investment in a foreign country) Par-

liament has guaranteed to the holders of property in Indian Railways a certain interest of 5 per cent.; supposing the Government was suddenly to discover that this was an outrage upon the rights of the Indian people, the Indian taxpayer, and to say that he guarantee it had pronounced should come down to 4 per cent.; you can understand that beyond the great injustice it would inflict it would absolutely prevent all investment in foreign securities for the future. (Hear, hear.) Precisely the same thing has taken place in Ireland. There is nothing you hear more than that he resources of Ireland are tremendous, if only they could be developed. There are fertile fields, abundant rivers, splendid fisheries; I believe there are coal mines and quarries; there is water power that requires nothing but capital to develop it; and capital, remember, must be the support of labour, the support of he industrious classes. (Applause.) Why cannot that support be given? Why will capital refuse to follow? Why does it avoid Ireland as a place more dangerous, more fatal, than any South American Republic? (Applause.) Because Parliament has tampered again and again with the rights of property. I have detained you for some time on this matter because I am very anxious, earnestly anxious, to bring home to you the deep conviction that has possession of my own mind, that there is nothing more futile, more hollow, or more false than this pretence, that this respect for the sanctity of property on which the whole of our civic institutions rest is in any sense the peculiar, or even the eminent, interest of the very rich. (Hear, hear.) On the contrary, depend upon it, in all classes of society, if we desire prosperity and progress, if we desire the promotion of civilisation, if we desire the maintenance of tranquility and peace, if we desire the existence of all the conditions that are the most opposite to those which Ireland displays at the present moment, we shall support, and earnestly support, all those who contend for the rights of property. (Hear, hear.) Now let me turn to other matters. The resolution which has been moved refers in terms in which I most heartily concur to the duties which are incumbent upon this country in its relations to the Colonies and to foreign lands. In expressing any sentiments on this subject a man is particularly liable to be misunderstood, or at least to be misrepresented. (Hear, hear.) It is a very convenient thing to say that anybody who stands up for the honour of England, or desires to maintain her position among the nations, wishes to maintain a state of quarrel and to banish the blessings of peace from the world, or is indifferent to the horrors of war. I maintain that the whole course of history and of our own recent experience shows the contrary, and that those are the truest apostles of peace, and have the most genuine sense of the horrors of war, who allow other countries thoroughly to understand that, while we deeply and earnestly value peace and goodwill amongst nations, we do not think that that end is to be attained by allowing our rights to be disregarded or our honour

to be contemned. (Applause.) Mr. Bright recently told you that the great honour of the present Government was that there was a great calm. A ship that chooses to run out of its appointed course, and the duty which it is appointed to perform, into the nearest harbour, can easily find the blessings of a great calm. (Laughter.) The question is whether that calm has been justly earned. I do not say but that it is the greatest privilege of a Ministry if it can point to a great calm which has been attained without sacrificing anything of the position of this country, or of the honour that it holds amongst nations. (Applause.) But to point to a great calm as in itself and alone a proof of the merits of your foreign policy is to elevate to the level of statesmanship the dogmas of a very respectable, but a very small and very mistaken clique of religionists. (Cheers.) England has great duties to perform. She has founded splendid Colonies, and has achieved a magnificent Empire beyond the seas. She has charged herself with the responsibility of the good government of 250 millions of people, who but for her would be plunged in anarchy and intestine war (cheers); and she must maintain her position and act up to the responsibilities she has assumed. (Cheers.) She must not shrink from the occasional exertion and the occasional risks which those duties she has assumed may involve. She must not be seduced by the prospect of a great calm, and she must not allow herself to think that the whole of her duties lie within the narrow compass of these four seas. (Hear.) But be assured that the policy of upholding her honour and maintaining the great creations which are due to the energy of her sons, of sustaining the policy which our fathers have handed down, is not only most consistent with our honour and our traditions, but it is also the surest path to peace. (Cheers.) Now, one word with respect to that subject which I have already dealt with in this town, and on which I shall not, therefore, dwell long, but which is so much uppermost in the mind of every man that you can hardly exclude it from any public utterance. The state of Ireland is a scandal and a disgrace to the country with which it is connected (cheers), and to the Government which is responsible for its existence. (Cheers.) Of course, I shall be told that the Irish question is no new one, and that Irish troubles have existed before this. Yes, the Irish difficulty has been with us a long time. It is like some chronic malady a man has, which he knows he very likely may never get rid of, but which by judicious and careful treatment he may make comparatively harmless, and which he may prevent from bursting forth into dangerous paroxysms. But if that man be misguided enough to desert the regular treatment to which he has been accustomed, and follow new doctrines and new fancies—to consult some eminent empiric, and to adopt a mode of treatment totally different from and the very reverse of anything which he has adopted before, it may be, of course, that he is cured; but I am afraid that is a contingency which in the present case we cannot contemplate. (Cheers.) But

it may be, and more likely is, the case that he has stimulated the malady into a dangerous and painful state of aggravation; and that is what has happened. I believe it was in this town that the celebrated gospel of the Upas tree was first preached. It was here that fatal policy was announced of which we have the result in the terrible outrages which have thrilled through the hearts and consciences of England. But let us also draw another moral from these terrible events. You have had at the hands of Radical politicians for years past denunciation after denunciation of the crimes of the landowning class in Ireland. I believe those denunciations to have been utterly unjust, and to have been wholly destitute of any foundation. But they have been pursued from party motives if not for party purposes; they have been pursued until they have impressed the feelings of an ignorant and excitable peasantry; and now you see in the terrible murders that have been committed to what excess denunciations of that reckless kind can lead. The warning which I want you to take is, that we cannot afford in this country of ours to have class set against class. (Cheers.) Of course, there must be changes—nothing is stable—nothing is permanent in this world. Changes are going on about us, and changes will work themselves into our national life; but let them be changes worked by the slow process of persuasion, by the natural growth of our institutions. Let them not be changes worked by kindling the animosity of classes against each other, and leaving them in the permanent attitude of conqueror and conquered. (Cheers.) It is a new feature in the policy of our time—politicians have always attacked each other, and no great harm has come of it; but these tactics in the interests of party—of hounding class against class—are new within the memory of the present generation. It has already gone on too long. It tends to weaken the country in which it is practised. Our enemies abroad, our enemies at home, learn that we are no longer a united people, that every attack upon us, whether from the outside or from the inside, meets with the sympathy of some party whose interest it is to encourage it, and our position is no longer as great and as secure as it was. (Hear, hear.) Depend upon it, if you wish to uphold the glory and strength of your country, in which we are all so deeply interested—if you wish to promote the interest of all classes, high or low alike—you will discourage the kind of policy, of politics which sets against each other the classes who, after all, are members of a common country, and who have a far higher interest in the common growth and prosperity of all than they can have in any petty and sectional victory of one class over another. (Cheers, during which his lordship resumed his seat, having spoken for an hour.)

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SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HON.

Sir STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE,

BART., G.C.B., M.P.,

AT LIVERPOOL,

APRIL 13, 1882.

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1882.

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At a meeting held at Hengler's Circus, Liverpool, under the auspices of the Liverpool Working Men's Conservative Association, upwards of 6,000 people being present, the following speech was delivered by Sir Stafford Northcote. The Earl of Lathom occupied the chair.

Sir S. Northcote, on rising to speak, received a most enthusiastic greeting. The right hon. gentleman said: My Lord Lathom, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I congratulate you with all my heart on this magnificent meeting. So there are Conservative working men, after all. (Laughter and cheers.) We used to be told that they were a myth. We were told that if there were such an animal as a Conservative working man, he belonged to a small knot of party recruits who, perhaps, might walk across the scene like what they call a stage army, making believe that they were a real force, or it might be that he belonged to an association who would willingly go to some rural scene of amusement, and partake in a Conservative fête in some gentleman's park; but as for real, intelligent Conservative working men who were to take their place in the Constitution of this country, they were laughed at, and we were ridiculed for believing in them. I should like to ask those who were sceptics then to tell us what they think of such a sight as that which we see now. (Cheers.) Aye, and it goes beyond that, because you know the old proverb, "Seeing is believing (cheers), but feeling is the truth" (renewed cheers), and it is not because we see you here assembled in your thousands to-day, but because during the fourteen years that your Association has been in existence, we have felt its power on more than one occasion, that we say that we believe in our heart in the Conservative working man. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I, for my own part, ever since I have had opportunities—and I have had several—of studying the character and the conduct of the working classes in this country, have felt that nothing more was needed than that they should do justice to themselves. I never had a

greater lesson in political science myself than the lessons that I received during the time I was engaged in an inquiry into the manner in which the working classes conducted their own friendly societies, and those beneficial institutions which they had organised for heir own good. I never had better lessons as to the manner in which debates should be carried on, in which difficulties were got over, in which the executive could bring itself into harmony with the representative body, than I had in the course of those inquiries; and when I concluded that task, I remember well the strongest feeling in my mind was that, although it might be possible to improve in this, or that, or the other, particular some of the rules of your societies, it was far better that you should work them out by yourselves than that you should get anybody to take upon themselves the task of teaching you. (Applause.) Now, gentlemen, why do I refer to that? It is because at the present moment there is a question which is placed before the working class of this country—a question of the highest importance to themselves and to the nation. It is not a question of an isolated character; it is not merely a question with regard to the relations of employers and employed, though those are important; nor the question of free trade, or the development of any of our industries; or other great questions relating to the commercial good of this country. I speak not of any of these. I speak of another question, far larger, deeper, more fundamental than these. It is the great question whether the working men of this country will think for themselves upon the constitutional questions of the day, or whether they shall get a caucus to think for them. (Applause, and No.) All other considerations, to my mind, as regards the condition of the great working class in England, sink into insignificance before this one, and I rejoice to think that I am able to meet an assembly in this the leading provincial city of England (applause) which has taken up this question seriously, has solved it, as I believe, in the right way, and who will be able, and will, I think, in honour feel themselves bound, to set to the other constituencies of England an example which they have so nobly laid down. (Applause.) It was this that Lord Beaconsfield foresaw. I think, if I rightly read the date of your Association, it must have been founded immediately after the passing of the Reform Act in 1867. I believe that that has been the outcome of the experiment, the bold experiment, the rash experiment as some thought it at the time, by which the late Lord Beaconsfield himself threw upon the country (applause) so large a measure of responsibility for the conduct of their own affairs. A year has passed since that great man was taken away from us. It has been a year of mourning to us, but a year in which we have drawn many an encouragement from the lessons he has bequeathed to us. We can do no more appropriate honour to his memory than to endeavour to fulfil the task which he commenced. (Applause.) As for ourselves,

gentlemen, I came down here, and rejoice to see you assembled as you are, and take courage and comfort from that which I see around me; and if you ask me in return whether there is any word of counsel or advice that I have to speak to you, I say yes, there is; but it is only a single word. I offer that word in full confidence that you will appreciate it and act upon it, and with the conviction that there is no other advice which I could give which would be better for your own interests, better for the interests of the country, than is contained in that one single word "Persevere." (Applause.) You have undertaken to carry the flag; carry it to the end. (Cheers, and "We will.") If you desire us to lead you to victory, leave us not without your support until that victory has been accomplished and established. (Hear, hear.) This is not the work of a day. It is not a struggle that has to be fought once for all; it is a continuing work. Depend upon it that as you have learned much no doubt in the course of fourteen years, during which you have been giving yourselves to the study of politics, so will you continue to learn if you address yourselves to the task in a true English spirit. You will continue to learn lessons day by day which will be precious to yourselves and to the country. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, we began this meeting by the moving of the adoption of a report, which we were told was to be taken as read. I hope that you understand those words in the same sense in which I understood them. I understood that we were to take that report and to read it for ourselves, and meditate upon it. That is what I have ventured to do, and I can assure you that, taking the report, and meditating upon the lessons which it contains, I have found no small benefit from many of the suggestions which are contained in it. I will take the liberty of calling your attention to one or two of them. I rejoice, in the first place, to see that this is your fourteenth annual meeting. I rejoice to see that you have justified your existence by a continuance in the increase of your numbers. Then I see that you have given attention to many of the great and difficult problems of the day. One of the very first suggestions you have made is that you have considered the way in which the political education of the people can best be conducted; you have established a scheme for providing lectures. That is a most valuable and most useful proposal. I am convinced that everything in that direction—lectures, Parliamentary debating societies, which are now becoming so popular, and other means of bringing people to consider and to discuss political questions—are of the very highest value. But let me turn to another point. In your third paragraph I see that you say that the Committee have shown their appreciation of the efforts made by the Grand Lodge of Orangemen in Ireland to protect the lives and property of the loyal and peaceable subjects of her Majesty in that country, who were left at the mercy of the lawless by the present Radical Government. You touch there a subject of the deepest interest, and which has given cause for the most painful reflections. It is well that

there should be those in that country who are ready to take their part in endeavouring to resist the spirit of lawlessness and to protect life and property if the Government fail to do it, and it is well that in this country practical sympathy and assistance should be rendered to those who have put themselves into that painful and invidious position. But I ask, what lesson does that not teach us as to the failure of the Government of the country in the discharge of that which everyone acknowledges to be the primary duty of every civilised Government in the world? Why is it that we are obliged to look to Orange Lodges and to voluntary assistance for that which it is avowedly the duty of the Executive Government and the Parliament of the day to do for us? There are sometimes expressons used by those who are responsible for the Government of the country which fill one with pain and with horror. I do not suppose for a moment that they look with indifference, or with anything but the keenest sense of pain, and shame, and horror, at the scenes that are now being enacted in the sister country. I do not suppose there is any Englishman, high or low, whose heart does not burn within him, whose blood does not run cold, when he hears of such outrage as those which have recently shocked and horrified us. I remember well how, some years ago, when our eloquent Prime Minister was about to call the attention of a great public meeting to the atrocties taking place and the sufferings which were being endured in a distant part of Europe (cheers and laughter)—I remember how he began his most eloquent speech by describing the feelings with which he had passed through the sleeping city of London, early in the morning, and had thought to himself when these millions of sleepers awoke, the first subject that would present itself to their minds would be the outrages in Bulgaria; and I do not doubt the same feeling animates the Prime Minister and the minds of his colleagues now when they think of the murder of benevolent, respected, and unprotected ladies in cold blood in the sister country. (Hear, hear.) But what is it, after all, the Government tell us? They say they do what they can, but they can do little if these classes do not protect themselves; and they taunt those who are suffering from these dangers and these outrages with not being ready themselves to take up arms in their own defence. One could almost think they were recalling the old story of that Persian king who gave word that the Jews should be destroyed, and when afterwards he was convinced he had given the command in error, and that injustice would be done, he was too proud to recall the command given. All he could do was to call upon the Jews to defend themselves. (Cheers.) That is not the spirit in which the Government of this country should be administered. Let us look a little further. My eye travels down your report, and I see there is a reference here to the want of spirit shown by what is called, not unfairly, their disgraceful surrender to the Boers and their misrule in Ireland. (Hear, hear, and hises.) Gentlemen, it is the same spirit which is at the bottom of both

these evils. It is the same want of courage, and of resolution, and of determination which has brought both these evils upon you. I will not raise the question—it is not necessary we should discuss the question—whether the policy of the late Government in South Africa was the right policy, or whether the policy now adopted by the present Government was the right policy with regard to the annexation of the Transvaal; but, whether one were right or the other right, this I maintain, that the manner in which the present Government played fast and loose, and blew hot and cold, encouraged and discouraged, and never carried into effect the policy which they have now taken up, until they had been defeated in the field—I say it was such conduct as this which fatally shocked and irremediably injured the *prestige* of England in the Transvaal. (Cheers.) It is the same thing in Ireland. It is because of their vacillation, because they said one thing at one time, and by what they said had raised a spirit which they now see to be too great for safety, and which they would control if they could—it is by such conduct as that that they are giving the impression which, let us hope, it is not too late to efface—that the Government of England are either unwilling or too blind to grapple with the greatest evil which possibly could be set up. (Hear, hear.) Gentlemen, it is impossible for an Imperial Government to avoid Imperial responsibilities. (Hear, hear.) And while we are ready—I trust the whole Conservative party are ready throughout the country—to give to the Government of the day our hearty and cordial support in everything that may really be necessary to maintain law and order and the rights of property, still I say it is not less our duty, on the other side, to note their shortcomings, to blame their errors, and to call upon them formally, and without making any false excuses, to perform the duty which they have neglected. (Hear, hear.) Gentlemen, I cannot but think for my own part that the present Government, though they came into office with great professions, with loud blowing of trumpets, with a great amount of abuse of their predecessors, and a great glorification of themselves (laughter), and although undoubtedly they number amongst them men of the highest oratorical powers, who are well capable of swaying, and who do use those powers to sway the minds of the people of England—I cannot help thinking that that Government has, since its work has been tested, greatly lost ground in the opinions of Great Britain. (Cheers.) Why, let me take one question, an important one, though it is one that has not yet been referred to on this occasion. I mean the question of finance. There was no point upon which the Government of Lord Beaconsfield was more seriously abused than with regard to its financial arrangements. Well, I am a modest man. I was responsible for much of those arrangements; and I have never cared to fight too earnestly for credit. I have said, and I hope I was not wrong in saying, as little as possible upon the financial policy of the late Government; though I do feel, and am prepared to contend, that

we were doing our best under very difficult circumstances, and that if the duties of the Government of the country were such as to render necessary a large expenditure, the course which we were pursuing was one which was best calculated to enable England to fulfil those duties without injuriously increasing the burdens of our population. (Hear, hear.) I still maintain that if our policy were now to be discussed, and we were to go through, question by question, the circumstances of each successive financial arrangement, good reasons, and adequate reasons, might be given for the course that we took. But I own that when I heard that the great financier of the age was going back into office, and that it was one amongst the most prominent points of his mission to restore order to our finances and to put an end to the irregularities of his predecessors, and when I saw that for that purpose he had taken upon himself the unusual double burden of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer (laughter) as well as that of the Prime Minister of the country, I could not but think that large and important measures of a financial character would be submitted to us. I believe the country thought so too. But what has been the result? We are taxed with extravagance. What was our expenditure? Our expenditure when strained to the highest point, at the time when this country had on its hands not only those arrangements which were necessary for preserving the peace of the East of Europe and maintaining the right of England in her communication with India, but also had at the same time to contend with that wholly unexpected and that most burdensome charge of the war in Zululand—even at that moment and in that year, which was the most expensive of all, we did not quite touch the figure which the present Government have reached in the year which has now expired. (Cheers.) In the year 1878-79 our expenditure amounted to £85,407,000. In the last year of our administration I left the expenditure at a little more than 84 millions. It has now risen in the year that has just expired to no less than £85,472,000 (shame and cheers), or some £50,000 or £60,000 more than the highest margin we touched; and will you get very much reduction in the coming year? I incline to doubt it. You will apparently; but I caution you with regard to this, for you, gentlemen, who, I have no doubt, understand financial questions, should look to the point. You will apparently have a smaller expenditure in this year than in the preceding year. You should look at this because it is important. There is a new and different way of estimating expenditure of the country introduced this year. (Oh!) In former years you took the whole of the expenditure on the Estimate, and accounted it at so much expenditure, and on the other side you took certain receipts, as, for instance, the sale of old stores, and grouped them on the side of revenue. That is going to be changed in future, and you will not have the whole expenditure on the one and the gross receipts on the other side to balance that; but you

will have these receipts deducted from the gross expenditure, and the expenditure will be less by the amount of these deductions; while, on the other hand, the revenue will also be less by exactly the same amount. (Applause, laughter, and interruption.) And, so far as I am able to judge from the papers that have already been presented, I imagine that that difficulty will be something like £800,000, so that probably the real expenditure estimated in the old way will be not less than about £85,000,000. I must apologise to you, and to the ladies, for going into details of this kind; but in truth they lie at the root of a great deal of the happiness and prosperity of the country (hear, hear); and it is worth while, when the country is allowed, to take notice of representations such as these addressed to it. When a great financier was about to perform miracles in the organisation of finances, it is worth while to consider how far these expectations have been fulfilled. I do not like to say anything that may seem disrespectful; but it is impossible not to be somewhat carried away by that which is called the *genius loci*, or, in other words, by the spirit of the place where you happen to be assembled. I find myself now in an area which is devoted to feats of horsemanship (laughter), and I am almost irresistibly reminded of the description given by one of our favourite writers, who passed away from us some few years ago, of a horse* such as, no doubt, you never saw in this or any other circus. It was described in graphic language as being a horse of great promise but of little performance. (Applause and laughter.) As he went past, we were told he would lift his legs so high, and use such grand action, that it was difficult for the spectators to persuade themselves that he was going at less than fourteen miles an hour. But though he inspired strangers with the warmest hopes, it is recorded that he inspired those who knew him well with a sort of grim despair. (Laughter.) I do not apply that, let me say, simply to our finance; I apply it to the general performance as contrasted with the general promises of the Government. (Hear, hear.) There have been other members of the present Government who have promised good things to us, but whose performance fell very short of them. There has always been a great profession amongst the Liberals; they were very loud in the days of the Mid-Lothian campaign in telling us that we neglected the homely but essential interests of the country for the sake of some wild foreign policy, or some ambitious imperial dreams, and they gave us to understand that they were the men who would redress the wrong. All I can say is, that when we did endeavour with the late Parliament to introduce measures of the kind which they said we ought to have brought forward, we were met by the most obstructive opposition on the part of men who now sit on the Treasury Bench. I remember on one occasion sitting the whole of the night of the 11th of August, thinking when the morning dawned on the 12th of those happy

* Mr. Pecksniff's horse.—See "Martin Chuzzlewit."

friends who were disporting themselves on the moors, whilst we were walking through the lobbies at the instance of Mr. Chamberlain (Oh, oh, and uproar) and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, the present First Commissioner of Works. These are things of the past, and these gentlemen have become converted, and as you know there are no enthusiasts like converts, and being converts they are determined they will put a stop to our wicked proceedings if they can. (Laughter.) They need not be afraid of that, for we should be the last people to stop any beneficial measures like those of which we are speaking. But they now come forward and propose the *clôture* in the hardest form they can in order to do—what? That is one of these difficulties with which we are beset. If I were disposed to be of a suspicious turn of mind, I would say it was in order to make an excuse for their not fulfilling their own engagements. (Applause.) Because undoubtedly it is true that the time which has been wasted in the discussion might have been, and ought to have been, profitably employed in proposing legislative work. (Applause.) I say that the Government and their supporters have no right, from what has passed, to think that if they had pressed such legislative measures they would have been met by obstruction. But remember this. Last year, when it was essential for the Government of the country that a certain measure should be dealt with with unusual speed we were quite ready to vote urgency, and to give them precedence in the carrying of that measure. (Hear, and cheers.) We would have done the same again. We were ready also to discuss and adopt many measures that they themselves were ready to propose, which would materially have lightened the transaction of business in the House, and which would have enabled the Government of the day, whatever Government it might be, to carry on that business with much less waste of time than heretofore. But none of these things will they have. They must have their *clôture*, and must insist upon forcing down not only our throats, but the throats of many of their own supporters (laughter), measures of which we feel the effect will be to curtail and degrade freedom of speech in Parliament. (Cheers.) We are told that this is a measure which ought not to be made a party question. I quite agree in that, and I agree with those who, upon many occasions, say that this or that or the other measure ought not to be made a party question. Somehow they always come to be made party questions. (Laughter.) That may be a necessity of the case, but let us understand what is meant when Government comes forward and makes proposals, and says, "Do not let us treat this as a party question." Proposals are made by them on their own authority, and proposals which they are aware are much objected to by a large proportion of the House, including many members of their own side—proposals which very fairly, it may be said, interest the whole House, because they affect the power of doing business—now how would you suppose that a man of business and common

sense would treat such a question as that so as not to make it a party one? The way, I suppose, would be that every man should be there to give his counsel openly and to give his vote freely, and according to his own opinion without regard to his party ties; but is that the way in which they treat us? Not at all. What they mean by saying it is not to be a party question is that their own party must support them, whether they like it or not, and the Conservative party must agree with them, however wrong the Government in their opinion may be. Gentlemen, we have made up our minds. We may be abused for our persistence in this matter, but we feel that we have a duty to perform, and we feel that a great responsibility is laid upon us, and we are determined that, whether we be few or whether we be many, when we see a duty lying clearly before us we will not shrink from performing it. (Cheers.) There have been occasions, even in the present Parliament, in which we have found that courage duly exerted has met with success. We have found that the minority, if they dare to use their Constitutional position, may influence, and do influence, the decisions even of a great majority, and I venture to think that this is an occasion of the sort. Oh, yes: the times are serious—the times are perplexing, the duties which lie either before the Ministry of the day, or those who might under any possible circumstances be called upon to take part in the conduct of affairs, are such as to make the boldest pause and be thoughtful as to the action which we are to take. Let us take counsel together. We are anxious that we should do it. You allowed me just now to give you an illustration drawn from the circus. May I, before we part, introduce to you one more horse? (Laughter.) It is one which you never saw, but of which, no doubt, many of you have heard—it was a horse not of flesh and bone, but of wood, and it played a great part in the history of Greece and of Troy. There was a long siege, and the city of Troy resisted the Greeks, who were unable to conquer it, and at last they retired, having constructed an enormous horse of wood and filled it with soldiers; and they sent emissaries to the Trojans telling them it would be greatly to their advantage, and, indeed, necessary to the safety of the city, that that horse should be introduced within the walls of Troy. The Trojans were only too ready to follow the advice; they fell into the trap. There were some who raised their voices against the policy of introducing the horse, but they were not listened to. They were the victims of popular rage. The walls had to be pulled down so that the horse should be admitted. There were warnings, and the sound of the clashing of arms even within the horse, as you might have heard recently a Secretary of State letting drop hasty words of what would happen when they got their wooden horse in. (Laughter.) But the work was done, the city was betrayed, and the horse brought forth the forces that were contained within it. Let us take

care that we are not led into a similar fate on this occasion. Let us take care that this power, which may for the moment be intended for legitimate purposes, does not become an engine in the hands of an unscrupulous Government for silencing any opposition that may henceforward be raised against it. (Hear, hear.) If it fell into the hands of a determined Minister, supported by an unscrupulous caucus, you may depend upon it such power would then be used, not only to force forward measures which might be disliked, and to stop those which the Government of the day might disapprove of; but more than that, to shelter the Government of the day from the effects of their own policy, from votes of censure or anything else that might be disagreeable, by the simple exercise of the power of closing the debate. This is an example we have had read to us in the proceedings of the French Parliament at certain periods in its existence. That is what we believe has taken place, what we believe will take place, in other countries where this system is in existence. But in England it would be a very serious thing in this respect to imitate foreign Assemblies; because the position Parliament occupies in the constitution of this great Empire is one to which no foreign Assembly can pretend, and which bears comparison with no other Assembly in the civilised world. (Hear, hear.) We, for our part, desire no closing of debate for the purpose of stifling the voice of any minority which can make itself properly heard and which represents the feeling of the people. Rather, we invite criticism; we invite discussion; we look with pleasure, turning from such painful scenes as these I have been describing, upon the prospect of great classes of Englishmen co-operating together in the legitimate study of great political questions and in the free and noble exercise of high political functions. (Cheers.)

SPEECH

DELIVERED BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE, BART.

K.C.B., M.P., ETC.

AT EDINBURGH

ON THURSDAY, 13TH OCTOBER 1881

SPEECH

BY THE

RIGHT HON. SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE

AT EDINBURGH.

Sir Stafford Northcote on rising was received with great cheering. He said:

Ladies and Gentlemen,—My noble friend Lord Dalkeith has kindly told you that he has undertaken to introduce me to this assembly, and I should feel that if I really needed an introduction, there is no one at whose hands I should be so glad to receive it. But I venture to hope that you will not think me presumptuous in saying that upon this occasion I feel that I do not require an introduction at all, because this is a meeting of the Conservative working men of Edinburgh, who have for some time done me the honour of electing and re-electing me as their president, and I am here on the present occasion to testify my interest in their proceedings; and if I may for a moment dwell upon the movements of so insignificant a person, I may tell you that my recent progress through the southern kingdom—which still, I believe, remains part of the United Kingdom—was due to the engagement which I had made early in the year to come and visit my friends in Edinburgh, and that I have found it impossible to make my way through England without receiving numerous invitations from Conservative associations and friends of the cause in some of the counties through which I have passed on my way here. If it had been in my power to attend to and accept all those invitations, I should indeed have had a very large amount of work cut out for me. I may say, also, that when it

was known that I was coming to Scotland, I received no inconsiderable number of invitations from most important Scottish constituencies, and, indeed, I might have spent pretty well the whole of the remainder of the Parliamentary recess in visiting the friends who have invited me to talk to them about politics in all parts of Great Britain. Well, that is tolerably cheering for one who is connected with the party that is in a minority. It shows that the heart and spirit of our friends have not been quelled. It shows that they do not look upon themselves as a defeated and a hopeless faction, but that they still claim their part in the management of the affairs of the country, and that they still hope for a time which shall enable them to wipe out the misfortunes of last year. Here in Scotland, especially, I have the pleasure of seeing around me many friends, some of them still representatives of Scotch constituencies, others who are what I may say past and future representatives, all of them ready to come forward and to say that in Scotland, at all events, the Conservative cause is not despaired of.

My noble friend has reminded you that a few years ago I had the honour of addressing an Edinburgh audience in this hall in which we now stand. Much has happened since then. It was five years ago or thereabouts that I had the honour of appearing before an Edinburgh audience. It was at a time when the Government of Lord Beaconsfield appeared at all events to possess the confidence of the nation, and when we were exerting ourselves, as we thought successfully, to justify the good opinion which had placed us in office. Almost up to the time of which I speak, the career of that Government had been a smooth and a successful one. But just before I had the honour of addressing the audience of which I speak, a change had begun to come over the spirit of the country. That change was mainly due to the awakening of the present Prime Minister from the lethargy which had apparently beset him after his great defeat in the year 1874—when he began once more to exercise those marvellous gifts of oratory which have given him an exceptional influence over the whole of this country, and especially over those parts of it which he has visited, and in which he has been personally known as a speaker—and when he was making up for his voluntary retirement and temporary self-abnegation, by pouring out upon us the accumulated flood of oratory that had been pent up in two or three sessions. Well, it was an anxious time. It was a time when this country and the whole of Europe were awakened by events over which we had no control—which were not of our originating—which, so far as we were concerned,

we should have been only too glad to have put aside and staved off. But they were events which involved issues of the greatest moment to the European system, and to the particular and separate interests of the United Kingdom. At that moment disturbances were beginning in the Ottoman Empire and in some of the provinces of Turkey which gave us reason to apprehend that the whole of that thorny Eastern question—which cannot be raised without at once affecting all the interests of the British Empire and of its great dependency in India—would be reopened. The country was awakened by the uneasiness which naturally attends the opening up of that question. It was also affected by the terrible stories of suffering, by the outrages and barbarisms which were being perpetrated in certain of the provinces of Turkey. There never was a moment at which it was of greater importance to the interests of the United Kingdom that her Ministers should be firm, and ready, and bold, and, at the same time, that her people should have confidence and should be patient, than there was at that moment. It was not a simple question of the misgovernment, or the cruelties, or the defects of the administration of this or the other country. It was a question which affected the whole European system,—I may even say the whole system of the world; and it affected particularly the interests of this country, because it threatened the communications between us and our Eastern possessions. But at that moment it pleased Mr Gladstone—while we were with the greatest anxiety watching the movements of all the Powers that were more or less interested, in different ways, in the solution of the question—it pleased Mr Gladstone, waking from his dreams, to come forward, and to set himself with all the energy of his nature, to accomplish two objects. The first of these objects was the destruction of the Turkish Empire, and the second was the destruction of the Conservative Ministry. Gentlemen, I will not detain you by going at length into the history of the events that followed. There was a serious addition to the complications that we had to face. We had to reckon with the other European nations that their interests—Russian, Austrian, and French interests—at every turn were concerned, and that we had, therefore, to deal with questions of the greatest difficulty and delicacy. It was no small addition to our responsibility—no small addition to the difficulties with which we had to contend—when we found ourselves not only confronted with jealous rivals, in the front and on the flank, but even in the rear we were taken at a disadvantage by our own countrymen. Gentlemen, notwithstanding that disadvantage,

Eastern question.

the Government, animated by the spirit of Lord Beaconsfield, did not shrink from the task imposed upon them. Despite the misconstruction, despite all the opposition open or covert, with which we had to contend, we were determined to do that which lay in our power to defend at the same time the general interests of Europe, and the more particular interests of this country. That last was imputed to us as a very great crime. We were told that we were guilty of the grossest selfishness in European affairs. We knew very well that we were the trustees of England, that we were bound to look after the interests of Great Britain, and we knew that if we did not do so there was no one else to do it. My belief is—I know that Lord Beaconsfield's belief was—that if we had been fairly treated and thoroughly supported by all parties in this country, we could have prevented the great struggle that afterwards ensued. The more I reflect upon the circumstances, the more convinced I am in that belief; but the very eloquent language in which we were assailed, the denunciations to which we were subjected, the misrepresentations, encouraged our enemies and weakened our hands.

Russia and Turkey.

Well, the war broke out—the war between Russia and Turkey. Using such means as we had in our power, we obtained the very great result of preventing that war from becoming general. I speak my own convictions—perhaps I misjudge; perhaps I am wrong—but my own belief is, that had we shown a less firm front, had we taken a course which, to judge from their example since, the present Government would likely enough have taken, that war, melancholy as it was, would have been made tenfold or a hundredfold more disastrous, for it would have brought about a great European convulsion. At the critical moment, when the Russian army were within striking distance of Constantinople, when every Power in Europe felt that the seizure of that capital would bring about the most disastrous results to the European system and to the cause of civilisation, who was it stopped that advance of the victorious army? It was the voice of Lord Beaconsfield—it was the decision of the English Cabinet; and I venture to say that when the present Government speak of what they have done in the way of solving the questions which undoubtedly have for some time perplexed Europe, and towards the solution of which they have no more than the fly on the wheel contributed—I venture to say that when they speak with triumph of those successes, they must not leave out of sight this, that if it had not been for the action of the maligned Conservative Government, there would have been no Constantinople to preach to, and no Turkish Empire to improve. Well, but now let me ask you for a moment what has been the net result of all

that has happened? Mr Gladstone failed in one of his two objects: he failed in destroying the Turkish Empire, and if we may judge from recent utterances, he must feel extremely glad now that he did fail. But in his other object he succeeded. He succeeded in destroying and turning out of office the Government to which he was so bitterly opposed. I speak with diffidence before a Mid-Lothian audience. You, of course, heartily approve of what he did. At all events, it was on this theatre that the great victory was won. Well, I am quite aware that a defeated party is always liable to the charge of misconstruing, undervaluing, and misrepresenting its successful opponents, and I have no doubt that even the Conservative party may fairly be looked upon as untrustworthy witnesses to the results of the policy of their opponents. I do not attempt to judge them as from my own authority, or ask you to accept upon any statement of mine, criticism of the conduct of our opponents. But I do think that the time has come when it is quite reasonable that you should look with your own calm judgments upon the results of the great work they were to accomplish in the beginning of last year, and that you should begin to ask, at all events, up to the present time how far these results have been satisfied. Taking the illustration of a business company, I would say that having turned out the old directors, you the shareholders have a perfect right now to call upon the new directors to explain some of the circumstances which may appear to require a little further elucidation.

Results of change of Government.

Well, now, what really has been the result of the change of Government? We were promised a great deal. To say that we have not obtained all that was promised is not much. Because when men are *in extremis*—when they are fighting, as it seemed to them that they were fighting, a very desperate battle—they are ready naturally to promise with the right hand and with the left hand, and if they can perform only a fair proportion of their promises, no doubt they think they have done very well. But let us for a moment consider two or three of the principal matters which interest a community in the carrying on of its affairs. What has been the success of the Government, and what has been the comparative success of this Government and of the last, in such matters as our foreign affairs, our colonial affairs, the management of our finances, the management of our Parliamentary system, and the management of that great portion of the United Kingdom, the sister island of Ireland? Well, I suppose I should take several days and nights if I were to endeavour to go through all these matters at length; but let me touch upon them very briefly. We have been talking about foreign affairs.

Lord Salisbury last night, in a very powerful speech, pointed out that there is at present prevailing an idea that everything that has been accomplished has been accomplished by the present Government; and he expressed very sincerely, from the bottom of his heart, his gratitude to a body of friends at Newcastle, who, in an address which they presented to us, recognised the fact that the Berlin Treaty was made under the auspices and at the instance of the Conservative Government. Well, there have been several things done by the Conservative Government which were greatly abused and very much sneered at by the present gentlemen when they were in Opposition, upon which I suspect that by this time their opinions are very much changed. I do not go into that question, which my colleague entered into last night, with regard to the particular arrangements in Bulgaria and in Greece. I think he showed pretty conclusively that the achievements of this Government fell far short of their promises, and fell short of what might have been expected even from the Berlin Treaty. But with regard to another and a very delicate question—I mean the question of Egypt, upon which it is necessary that we should speak with great reserve and caution—I think even upon that it is not amiss to compare the proceedings and the action of the late Government with the words, at all events, and possibly the action, of the present Government.

The Suez Canal.

Now, all of you know of what enormous importance it is to the interests of the British Empire that your road to India should be safe and secure. You know well that in the first or second year of Lord Beaconsfield's Government an opportunity occurred for obtaining—by no act of violence, by no act of overbearing power, by no disregard of the interests of others, but by fair purchase—an important influence over the regulation of that great highway to the East—the Suez Canal. When it became a question with our Government whether we should make the purchase of the shares that were then offered to us, we had to consider not only the advantages this country might possibly obtain from the purchase, but also the great disadvantages we might incur if we failed to make it, and if that great enterprise were to fall—as it possibly might have fallen—into the hands of another European Power. We did purchase; and the country confirmed our act. But it was sneered at and reprobated in every possible way both by Mr Gladstone and his colleagues in office. We were told, of course, that as a matter of business it was the most ridiculous speculation that could have possibly been made. Well, we did not think much of that, because we did not make the purchase as a business speculation. But at the same time we felt that if it were regarded as a business transaction, it was not unlikely

to turn out a good one. After all Mr Gladstone's and Lord Hartington's sneers and reprobation, supported as they were by elaborate calculations and quotations from the price-list, the result is this. We were told it by the Prime Minister himself. I would not ask you to take things on my authority, but on the authority of your right hon. representative. Mr Gladstone was asked in the House of Commons this year as to the past and present value of the Suez Canal shares which we had purchased, and he told us this—that whereas the original price, including all the expenses connected with them, had cost the country £4,076,000, the present value of the shares might be taken at £8,826,000. Consequently, said Mr Gladstone, they may be said to have acquired a profit of £4,750,000. Well, I said we did not consider the matter in the light of a commercial speculation; but, at the same time, it is just as well it should be known we had not altogether thrown away the money so invested. But I don't wish to lay much stress on that, because I am quite aware that at the present moment it is not in contemplation to realise our profit. It is not in contemplation to treat these shares as a man might treat the shares he has bought in some South American railway. We want to occupy a position which will be of importance to us in the maintenance of our highway to India. And, remembering the position which the Suez Canal occupies in that communication, I say we have done well to obtain that position. It is all very well to talk about the number of votes you get. It is not the number of votes to which you must look; it is the great influence we obtain by the hold we have—the right we have to speak in these affairs; and this I will undertake to say from my own knowledge, that as long as we remained in office—and from what I have heard since we quitted office—no question of importance has arisen regarding the management of the magnificent canal in which English interests were at stake,—there has been no such occasion on which the British directors have not been listened to with respect, and their point carried.

Its financial results.

But we must go beyond that. Let us look at what is passing at the present moment. I allude to it with delicacy and reserve; but you see yourselves how anxious every one is for the next news—the news of the next week, or month, or so—from Egypt. There have been in that country movements which might easily, under certain circumstances, have led to revolution; and revolution would have led either to occupation of the country by one or more European Powers, or to a state of anarchy which would have been more disastrous even than foreign occupation. How is it that that has been averted for the present? and how is it

Egypt.

that the dangers which still, I fear, to some extent exist, have been mitigated to the comparatively small dimensions which they now exhibit? Through two circumstances. In the first place, the dangers would have been multiplied an hundredfold if Mr Gladstone's policy of turning the Turkish officials "bag and baggage" out of the Turkish dominions had been adopted. You have been able at a critical moment, by your representations to the Turkish Government, to retard and stave off the dangers of military insubordination in Egypt. You could not have done this after a "bag and baggage" clearance. That is one circumstance. But there is another. The result of our purchase was, that we became more connected with the financial affairs of Egypt. We found that country in a position which threatened bankruptcy and ruin. Bankruptcy and ruin, we are told, occasions only the ruin of a few bondholders and speculators. Gentlemen, in this case it meant a great deal more than that. It meant putting on the Egyptian *fellaheen* an intolerable pressure, in order to wring from them a miserable amount of taxation. It threatened the putting, by the Egyptian Government, of an intolerable pressure upon their own taxpayers, in order to wring from them that miserable amount of taxation. By the intervention of which we were the authors, you have obtained enormous improvements in the fiscal administration of that country. So far from your action having been selfish, it has been of the greatest benefit to the Egyptian people. It has enabled the Government to do justice, or something more like justice, to its creditors abroad, while, at the same time, it has been putting less and less pressure upon its subjects at home; and though you have now had the spectacle of military disaffection, and something approaching to a military revolt, that has not been complicated by what would have been a most serious complication—distress among the population. The intervention of your English officers, of your English representatives—of Sir Edwin Malet, who, I am glad to say, has received the reward of his services, and of another officer, Mr Colvin, who, I hope, will also receive similar reward—staved off that danger for the present. I say nothing more upon that subject; but don't let yourselves be led away by any clap-trap observations from keeping your attention fixed upon the great importance, if you mean to maintain the British Empire in India,—the great importance of maintaining that position which is so valuable to you in Egypt.

Africa—the Transvaal.

Well, I don't know that there have been any other foreign matters in which the present Government have greatly distinguished themselves. They tell us that we were all wrong everywhere, and we supposed they were going to put us all right everywhere. Perhaps you may think they have done it, there-

fore I won't enlarge upon the circumstance, but I will say one word upon another of the important interests that were committed to their charge. Next to foreign affairs let us look for a moment to colonial affairs, and from Egypt we naturally go to the other route to India—viz., the Cape. I ask you, are you satisfied with the conduct of the present Government? I cannot conceive of what materials that man could be made who is satisfied. I quite understand the position that was taken by those who said that we had no business to annex the Transvaal, and that it ought to be given up. The present Government said that while they were out of office, but when they came into office they did not do what they had said, because they told us distinctly that nothing could induce them to give it up until her Majesty's authority was vindicated. Indeed, they held stronger language than that, for I am not overstating the case. They said we must uphold that which had been done, and we must maintain the authority of the Queen, for the sake not only of the empire, but for the sake of those who are directly concerned—the great body of the inhabitants, native as well as European, of the Transvaal itself. I could have understood those who said these objects are desirable, but they are not to be obtained at the cost of bloodshed. Or I could have understood those who said these objects are such that we must not altogether shrink from that terrible evil—the necessity for bloodshed. But the Government have taken all these courses one after another, and have always contrived to take the course at each time which was the most likely to produce mischief. If they had, in the first instance, frankly said that they were prepared to give back the Transvaal, they might have done it upon such terms as they chose. They would have done it with the most favourable conditions that they chose to impose, and with the prestige of the British Empire behind those conditions, with the certainty that they would have enforced them, and that they would have been observed. What happened? Having first refused, and refused over and over again, and allowed language to be used which seemed to imply that their determination was final—having refused to give up that position, they agreed, after they had been beaten two or three times, to abandon it on conditions. Well, the conditions were very carefully arranged, and they appeared to be accepted; and now it seems that they have not been accepted, and that the opposite party say that it must be given up without conditions, or next to none. And at the present moment it appears to be a matter that is being carefully discussed by the Government whether they shall accept those pretensions of the Boers to obtain the sovereignty of that country which was

lately in the hands of our Government, to the prejudice not only of any British subjects who might be there, but to the prejudice also of the large native population—without conditions that may secure either the one or the other. Well, I really won't go into the controversy of whether this is right or wrong, but I ask you, is this one of the fields in which you can say you have gained so very much by the change of Government?

Financial position of the Government.

Gentlemen, I will say a very few words upon another question, although it is one of considerable interest to us all,—I mean, upon the financial position of the Government. We were told that we were the most extravagant and the most mismanaging Government in the matter of finance that had for a long time swayed the destiny of the British Exchequer. We had all sorts of terrible imputations cast upon us. But what have we seen the present Government do? They have accepted the main lines of our financial arrangements so far as relates to all those questions which they were so great upon—on the reduction of the national debt, and the manner of dealing with the gradual extinction, or at all events gradual reduction, of the national debt. We have had a great deal of contempt poured upon our proposals with regard to the sinking fund, and yet the sinking fund is maintained, and is made the very basis of their financial proposals! I do not care to go back to matters which are now past, but yet I do venture to say one word to you—because words very often change their meaning and are misunderstood—with regard to that matter of the sinking fund. You understand, I hope, what was the nature of the proposal that I made upon that subject some years ago. Some years ago the practice of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was, in estimating for the expenditure of the coming year, to make provision, of course, for the payment of the interest of the national debt for the coming twelvemonth; and as the national debt was gradually diminished by the action of terminable annuities which had been created by Mr Gladstone and other Ministers, the amount that was so required for the payment of the annual interest from time to time somewhat diminished. The proposal which I made was, that we should fix a certain sum—somewhat higher than the amount that we were then paying for the interest of the discharge of the debt, and that that amount should be applied every year to the payment of the interest in the first place, and with regard to the remainder, for the reduction of the principal.

Sinking Fund.

The object which I had in view was this, to introduce something like steadiness into our finance; and that we should not from time to time, because there happened to be a little reduction here in our charges, or a little reduction there, apply a

smaller sum than we were doing to the reduction of the debt; and I therefore called upon the Parliament, and the House of Commons was good enough to agree, to raise the amount that we were paying at that time—something like twenty-seven millions and a quarter—to a fixed amount of twenty-eight millions a-year, which twenty-eight millions a-year was to continue permanently, and so to cover not only the interest but the reduction of the debt. Now, I know I am speaking to a body of gentlemen who are familiar—a great many of them—with business calculations, and they will easily understand the operation of such a proposal as I made in the event of additions not being made to the debt—that is to say, if the twenty-eight millions were enough in one year to pay the whole charge of the debt, and to leave, say, half a million or a million surplus, that half million or million surplus being struck off from the capital of the debt, the amount of interest to be paid in the next year would be less by the amount of the interest on that half million or million; and as the amount that would be paid would be the same, of course that same amount would not only suffice to pay the whole interest of the debt on the half million or million amount, but something more, because it would also cover the reduction upon the amount which had been saved by the discharge of that million or half million of capital; and as this process was continued, the amount of charge for interest would every year become smaller, while the amount applicable to the redemption of capital would every year become larger. When once these provisions had been put into an Act of Parliament, the reduction of the debt would become a serious matter, which could not be tampered with without a solemn Act of Parliament; and my belief was and is that it would be a very great safeguard against tampering with our financial system that such a provision should exist. Well, this was laughed at at the time; but it is a system which has been maintained, though with a shrug, by Mr Gladstone himself, and it is in fact the basis of the proposal which he made this year, but which we have not yet had carried into full effect, of some further operations upon the debt. These are operations in detail which are consistent with, and the natural sequence from, the arrangements which I made.

But then you may be told—"Oh, yes; that is all very fine, supposing that you did not add to the debt in any other way." Well, it is perfectly true we did add to the debt. We added to the debt in two ways.[1] We added to the debt, in the first place,

[1] The other way in which we added to the debt, but which I omitted to mention, was by borrowing money to lend to local authorities. The sums so borrowed are fully covered by the local securities on which they have been advanced, and do not really constitute any addition to the National Debt at all.—*Note by Sir S. H. N.*

by the sums which we felt ourselves obliged to raise for the purposes—the great purposes—of national defence. But we did not propose to add these as a permanent addition to the debt. When we had ascertained what the amount was which remained upon our warlike expenditure over and above that provided for out of taxation, we turned the amount into a short annuity, which would expire by the year 1885, and for the purpose of covering the payment of that annuity we put into a new Act of Parliament a provision that the amount that should be provided every year under my system for the interest and reduction of the debt should be raised from £28,000,000 to £28,800,000. Therefore, we did make provision for the amount so raised. Mr Gladstone has turned a portion of the money—that was not this particular portion, but a portion which was to expire within the short period of 1885—into a longer annuity, and spread it over a greater number of years, extending it to the year nineteen hundred and some date or other. We used to be told that system of spreading the debt over several years was a very wicked thing, and I suppose in our hands it was a very wicked thing; but it is marvellous how that which is wicked in the hands of one man is good in the hands of another.

Other financial operations.

With regard to other financial operations, undoubtedly I was one who looked with some anxiety as to what would be the proceedings of the great Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer with his first budget. He did not leave me long in the dark. I thought he would have taken a year at least to consider the subject and set me right in a very superior manner. But that was not Mr Gladstone's view of what was his duty. Setting aside all other matters, he came forth with his important budget in the very first months of his Government, and what was the important budget which he proposed? He proposed three things. He told us in the first place that it was absolutely necessary that he should proceed with this at once, because he had a very important treaty on hand—the commercial negotiations with France. It was of the highest importance to the interests of this county—it was of the highest importance to the interests of this country—that we should get a good and favourable treaty with France, and there was a means open to us for obtaining this desirable result. Give him the means to reduce the duties on the French wines, and we should see what we should see. Now, nobody would for a moment dispute the great importance of having a good commercial arrangement with France; but suppose you were to say to France—"If you don't come to a good agreement with us, we will add a shilling to our duties on your wines," that would be a very wicked thing: that would be retaliation—that

Mr Gladstone's first Budget.

French wines.

would be contrary to the principles of free trade; while, if you say to France—"If you'll give us these terms, we'll take off sixpence from our duties," that would be quite right. I don't doubt there is a good deal in it, and I accept with submission the teachings of so high an authority. Mr Gladstone had a right to speak with authority on such a matter, because he had been the Minister principally responsible for the original treaty with France in 1860, and everybody thought, "Here it is at once. We have got this great Liberal, economical, and intelligent Government, which is going to set right the position of England in the European markets by this great transaction with France." Do you think it has been so very successful? Well, that was one thing. Then he had got something else. He was going to give us the abolition of the malt tax. Well, I am really afraid to speak about that abolition, because I see Mr Gladstone goes about now saying, "I call you all to witness"—I think that was to the electors of Leeds—"I call you all to witness that for years, when the Conservatives or the Tories have been out of office, they have always been crying for an abolition of the malt tax, and when I gave it to them they don't seem to care about it." Well, that is very wicked; but really it is hard upon us that we should be treated in that way. So far as I can remember, I never voted for the abolition of the malt tax in my life, nor I think have many of the leading Conservatives done so. We did not feel we were called upon to do so—not because I should not think it was a desirable thing to give every possible relief to the great agricultural interest, but because I felt it was impossible for the revenue to dispense with the duties on malt liquor, and because I did not see my way to any change of the system of raising the duty, which would make any material difference, or any difference at all, to those who had to pay it. We always, therefore, resisted the proposal; but I may say we were a little astonished when Mr Gladstone came forward with a proposal which was, in one sense, to do away with the malt tax, and, on the other hand, to put on an additional beer tax which should produce something similar, only a little more. I daresay many of you have heard the story of the philanthropic old lady who, when there was a discussion about doing away with chimney sweeps, suggested that a good way would be to put a goose down the chimney, allow it to flutter, and so cleanse it. It was pointed out to her that perhaps that would be cruel to the goose, and she replied, "Well, I should not like to be cruel to the goose; if you were to put a couple of ducks down the chimney, perhaps they would do as well." Now really, as it seems to me, a greater amount of suffer-

Malt tax.

ing is laid upon the unfortunate producers of barley than was the case formerly, because they are now told that the malt tax is taken off; but as a corollary to that it is added that brewers had better use a greater number of substances other than barley. But really when Mr Gladstone comes forward and has the courage—I will say the courage—to claim the credit for abolishing the malt tax because excise duties are objectionable, and the malt tax is an excise tax—may we not ask you what the beer tax is? Is not that an excise duty? I fear that I can hardly discuss with patience such remarks as these.

Present expenditure.

Well, gentlemen, perhaps we may be considered over-critical in these matters. But let us look to another question—to the net results of this perfect and economical balance. I ventured to say the other day, in some observations I made in England, that the expenditure of the present year, as shown in the Appropriation Act of this year, was considerably larger than the expenditure of the last year for which the Conservative Government were responsible. Mr Gladstone was good enough to take notice of what I had observed, and said, "Yes, oh yes; that is perfectly true. I quite understand it, and everybody would understand that. Of course, we could not expect that the expenditure should not be higher, because we had the consequences of the action of the wicked Conservative Government still to bear upon us." I daresay you know, gentlemen, what happens when you discharge a servant, and still more several servants, and take on others in their places, especially if in these others one of them is taken because he or she is a treasure. I have always remarked that a treasure is a very expensive servant. In the first place, they are always entirely discontented with what was done by their predecessors, and you have to get new appliances here, and to make new allowances there, and you do everything you can to accommodate yourselves to the treasure. But, then, you do that willingly, because you think of the great advantages you are going to derive. After a time this goes wrong, and that goes wrong, but it is always thrown upon the late establishment. Everything that goes wrong is thrown upon the late establishment, and everything that goes right, of course the new servants take the credit for. I was prepared, therefore, for Mr Gladstone's answer. But let us look a little more closely. His expenditure is due to our sins; but our sins were charged upon us in our foreign policy, and in the expenses—the necessary expenses, as we say; the unnecessary expenses, as they alleged —for wars or preparations for war. I will leave this class of expenditure on one side. But I particularly wish to draw attention to the increase in the Civil Service expenditure. That

has nothing to do with our wicked policy; and yet, not in the year immediately following, because then they might say, "You had entered into the engagements which we had to fulfil," but in the next year, when they had the whole thing in their own hands, the Civil Service estimates alone, without military services, was £1,300,000 more than ours. Well, I do not think myself that we have had such an overwhelming superiority shown in their finance to equal the anticipations that were formed by some of those who returned them. I do not know what was at the bottom of the minds of many of the voters upon the last general election, but I know that there were some who said, "Things have gone badly under these Tories, but now we are promised a much better state of things; we shall have a remission of taxes, and we shall have glorious prosperity; let us go in for these gentlemen who are to give it to us." Now, have they given it to us?

House of Commons.

I do not like to detain you by going at great length into the subject which we have before us. But I do trust you will forgive me if I am perhaps a little in excess, because this is the only opportunity I shall have to speak to my friends in Scotland, and because I know there are present here a large body of the representatives of this northern portion of the kingdom. I will say a very few words upon another point. I have asked you what you thought of the administration of the Government in its foreign, in its colonial, or in its financial arrangements. Let me ask you how far you think they have justified the pretensions that they put forward to superior ability in their management of the House of Commons. You know perfectly well how important it is for the preservation of the liberties of this country that freedom of speech should be secured for the House of Commons. You cannot get a blessing of that sort without the possibility of some counterbalancing disadvantages. I hope we may be able to reduce within reasonable and due limits an excess of licence which has very much interfered with the freedom of debate in the House. But I do not think that the present Government have as yet, at all events, shown themselves particularly able to cope with the great difficulties of this question. Consider the advantages that they have had with their enormous majority, and with the submissive tendencies of that majority when called upon by its leaders. And yet what have they done? At the end of the second session of their Parliament they are still holding up their hands and crying out, and saying that something must be done to make the House effective. Well, but why have they not in all this time been able to come forward with a remedy? Let me tell you this: all that has been done has been done not only

without their aid, but in spite of their opposition. It may be possible—I do not say that it is not—to improve on the methods by which we do our business. It may be possible to reduce the length of time that is expended upon certain clauses or certain stages of bills, or in other ways to facilitate the action of Parliament. That is one of the things which may very well be considered. It may also be possible that some powers—additional powers—should be given to enable the House to get more rapidly through the work which is liable to run into excess. But one thing is quite certain, which is, that if there is to be proper progress in your assembly, you must have the power of putting down and silencing unruly members. That was a matter we felt in the late Parliament, and that was a matter to which I, as leader for a time of the House of Commons, addressed myself with such ability as I have.

Special powers.

But I was met by something very different from co-operation on the part of the gentlemen who sit opposite to us, and who sat opposite to us then. It was in spite of them, and with the very greatest difficulty, that I was enabled to carry a rule which enabled the Speaker at all events to silence members who obstinately refused to obey his authority; and when after much difficulty I had carried that as an order that might endure for one year, and endeavoured to make it an order that should be permanently placed on the books of the House of Commons, I was opposed by, I think, no less than three or four of the leading members of the present Cabinet. Happily we carried it against their opposition, happily we placed that rule among the orders of the House of Commons, and the effect was that when the matter came for trial some time in the course of the last session, by the operation of that rule—imperfect, inadequate as I admit it to be, but still the only rule you had to go by—by it you were able to silence thirty or forty members who were opposing your proceedings, and were able to carry on your business, such as it was. Again, when the Government made an appeal to the House and said, "Give us special powers, under the name of urgency, to enable us to carry through the discussion on a particular bill of great importance," we, the Conservatives, came forward and said, "Yes, we will support you in that which you have shown to be of national importance;" and the House, acting unanimously together, and making use of that power of repressing unruly members which we had given it—the House came to the conclusion that the special powers were necessary. Gentlemen, when the Government had got that power, they thought they could go a little further, and they endeavoured to get that same rule of urgency for the granting of supplies and for carrying on

every business of Parliament, which, had it been given to them, would have delivered the House of Commons, tied hand and foot, into the hands of the Ministry. We stood up against that, and we stopped that. I do not know what we shall hear in another session,—we shall be prepared to consider anything that may be proposed, reasonably and moderately; but we will not allow the freedom of speech to be filched from us. At all events, there is no such evidence of the great superiority to which the Government lay claim in the management of the House in that particular. Nor do I think they showed greater qualities on another thorny question in the management of the House. I refer to the claim of Mr Bradlaugh to take the oath. I don't now mean to raise the merits of that great question, for a very great and important question it is, but only to say that we acted on our conviction of what was our duty as members of a Christian community. We took our stand against the profanation of the oath, and the taking of God's name in vain. But I don't raise that question, which I admit has many sides to it, and which, if we touch it at all, ought to be discussed at full length. I only point to it now to show that the action of the Government throughout this whole affair was one which greatly increased the difficulties of the situation at every turn. And when they had brought us to a point of the greatest difficulty, they abandoned the lead of the House, and called upon the Opposition to take it up. We might fairly—according to the laws of the game, so to speak—we would have been perfectly justified in refusing that responsibility. We thought it our duty under the circumstances not to shrink from the responsibility we had so undertaken, and to take the place which the Government had abandoned.

Ireland and the Land laws.

Gentlemen, there is but one remaining of the subjects to which I shall call your attention, and by the conduct of which I stated you might test the merits of the Government which you have placed in power. It is the condition of affairs in Ireland. I speak at this moment especially with very great reserve upon that question, because within the last few hours we have received intelligence of the most momentous character. We have been calling upon the Government for some time past to show the energy which was required in order to maintain the peace of the country. We have been pointing out to them, that if they desired to give fair play to the Act which they have passed for the alteration of the land laws of that country, they must at all events insist upon putting down those who determined that the Act should not have fair play, and who are aiming at something far beyond what appears within the four corners of that Parliamentary piece of mechanism—who are aiming at nothing less

Repeal of the Union.

than the disruption of the United Kingdom, and the establishing of a separate political society. Nothing can be more disgraceful to an empire such as ours than the condition of affairs which has lately been coming about in Ireland. Not only has there been a disposition to refuse to pay that which men had covenanted to pay; not only has there been a readiness to resist the claims of legal creditors by the application of force and by a resort to the strong hand; but beyond that, and much more serious it is than that, there has grown up in that country an organisation, perfect in its kind, unscrupulous in its means of action, and undisguised in its objects, which has set itself up against the legal and constitutional Government of the country, and upon the existence and the success of which the Irish rebels have set their hearts. The Government have now struck a blow against the leader of that organisation. I trust that they are not too late in their action; I trust that they will persevere steadily in the action they have commenced. My belief is that the time they have delayed has rendered matters more serious, and that the course which now lies before them is thornier for that delay. I am not sure that they have not themselves great responsibility for the bringing about of the state of matters which has culminated for the present in this action of which we have just had notice. But, at all events, I will say this—If you are judging this Government, look what the condition of Ireland was when they received it from our hands, and look what it is at the present moment. I may be told that it is not fair to judge by the result. We were judged by the result. But here at the beginning you had the testimony of the Government themselves in language which they used even in Mid-Lothian itself, that Ireland was never in better condition,—never more peaceable, never more satisfactory, than it had been since they—the Liberal party—had taken its land laws into their hands in 1870. So satisfied were they that they not only used that language while they were striving to attain power, but after they had attained power; and when it was their duty to consider what steps they should take to maintain the happy condition in which they said the country was placed, they acted against the advice of those who had a knowledge of the circumstances of the country—acting against the advice not only, as I believe, of many members of the Irish Executive, certainly of their predecessors, but also that of the judicial authorities and the magistracy of the country,—and resolved to allow the safeguards which had been for long in existence, but had been sparingly restorted to, against any agrarian troubles—to allow those safeguards to lapse, to allow the people to obtain possession of arms, and to encourage by the rose-coloured

language in which they indulged those who believed that the time had come for the blow which they designed to strike at the empire. That was the course of the Government when they first came into office. It was not many weeks after that—certainly it was not above two or three months—that the Prime Minister felt himself called upon to tell us that Ireland was within measurable distance of civil war. And from that time to this, whether there has been denunciation or palliation—whether there have been attacks upon the Land League and sermons to the Land League, or attacks upon the landlords and discouragements to the landlords — whether there has been abortive legislation or legislation which has been brought to a result—one thing has gone on steadily, and that is, the continuous action of the Land League unchecked, uncontrolled by the legitimate Sovereign Power of this kingdom. At this moment we have, as loyal citizens and fellow-subjects, one paramount duty. It is to sustain the Government if they desire really to take efficient action for maintaining law and order. I only ask you to look at the matter in connection with what I have been saying, in order to ask you whether the proof of the great superiority of the present over the late Administration is to be found in their administration of Ireland.

The Land League.

Gentlemen, I have endeavoured, no doubt from a party standpoint to some extent, but still with no conscious unfairness,—I have endeavoured to sum up to you what appear to me to be the results of the great reaction of last year. Study these things for yourselves. But I will ask this one question, How does the country appear to be affected by what they have seen? I may, perhaps, be too sanguine—I may, perhaps, be taking what will be called a partisan view of matters—but it seems to me that the country is beginning to awake. It began to awake not very long after the change of Government. I do not refer to isolated elections, but I refer to significant defections from the ranks of the Ministry itself. Before two or three months had elapsed, one brilliant young member of that administration—the Marquis of Lansdowne—thoroughly acquainted with the condition of Ireland, who had himself, as had his predecessors, striven loyally and manfully to do his duty to the great estates of which he is the owner,—the Marquis of Lansdowne felt compelled to separate himself from those with whom he was politically connected, and to abandon the prospects of a brilliant career in the Liberal party. That was significant; but a still more significant defection followed. In the beginning of this year, one of the greatest of your Scotch nobility—one whose name, I doubt not, will always command the respect of every Scottish audience—the Duke of Argyll,—found

Results of last year's reaction.

himself unable to remain in harmony with his colleagues. Well, it may be that these were isolated cases. It may be that the Government still floats on a tide as full as ever. To me it seems that this is rather a case in which you may begin to apply the words of the poet, when he said that he saw from the beach in the morning a barque moving gallantly, but when he came to look again in the evening,

"The barque was still there, but the waters were gone."

And though I do not go so far as to say yet that the barque of the Liberal Administration is stranded by the ebbing of the tide, it seems to me that it is floating on somewhat shallower waters than it did a twelvemonth ago.

Duty of Conservatives as a constitutional opposition.

I know very well what the retort upon us is, and what will be said on behalf of the Government. They say to us—"All this is very fine, but what have you, gentlemen, to propose?" I say that is a retort which we can afford to listen to in contemptuous silence. It is no answer when we call upon them and say—"What are you going to do with your country, and how do you manifest your fitness to guide it," for them to turn round and say, "Tell us what you wish us to do?" We have done that more than enough. We do not desire to embarrass or hamper them, but we do not desire to assist them more than it is an ordinary and necessary duty of any constitutional opposition to do. Show us a constitutional necessity, show us a great Executive Government appealing to all loyal persons in the kingdom to support their authority, and they will never find the Conservative party wanting in the response. But, while we are ready to do our own duty, we are not ready to do theirs. We think we do best by maintaining our own organisation, and by endeavouring as far as possible to encourage our friends to study constitutional questions, and to take up an attitude which will enable them to do their fair part in the defence of the Government. We may do it under difficulties and discouragements. You know well enough that difficulties and discouragements used not, at all events in former times, to prevent English or Scottish soldiers from doing their duty. Even now, if the volunteers are called out in the middle of the most inclement and tempestuous weather, you know right well that the good, warm, bold Scottish heart, and the good frame of the Scottish volunteer, will carry him through under the most discouraging circumstances. It may be that we who are calling upon you now to be volunteers in the service of the constitutional army may have to bid you undergo many days of inclement political weather, and many storms of abuse or ridicule. We know well the character

of the men to whom we are appealing, and we know that if we can but convince you that the cause is just, you will not shrink from taking the necessary steps to support it. You know that those who are calling upon you so to act are not men who will desert the men who fight and suffer in their cause. The British Empire is one of large extent, and it calls for the services of her sons in distant climes and amongst strange peoples, and far away from home associations; and the mind of the Englishman or Scotchman—ay, and I will add Irishman—easily turns from the quarter where he is serving his country to the home which he loves, and to those who are interested and who are watching his proceedings and dangers. But we know also that men placed under the greatest difficulties, under a tropical sun or under the most inclement snows, have been sustained by the consciousness that their fellow-countrymen at home—not only their families, but the whole nation—are breathlessly awaiting the news of the progress which their gallant brethren are making: they know, and they are supported by the knowledge, that they are only the representatives of the great power of the British Empire, and that, though they may apparently be overwhelmed for the moment by the numerical superiority of their foes, there is that mighty unseen power in reserve behind them for their protection and support. Whether that is a description which will long be true of the British Government is a question which is beginning now to suggest itself to some anxious minds. It would be a sad day indeed if those forebodings were to be realised in which some are so gloomily indulging; it will be a sad day when the British soldier will go into action without the consciousness of that great support from home which he has hitherto had—if he has not the certainty that, if defeated to-day, to-morrow, or the next day, at all events supports will come, and the power of the whole empire will be put forward in his behalf. But if he goes to battle with the discouraging idea that, at the last moment, when he has shed his blood in the cause which he has believed, and been justified in believing, to be the cause of his country, he may be neglected and abandoned by the power at home—no, I will not complete the sentence; I do not believe that the spirit of the nation has fallen so low as that. I believe that in one form or another that spirit is now animating the nation, and that unless we see an entire refutation and confutation on the part of the Government of the suspicions which have been of late gathering against it—unless we see that, I venture to predict that the spirit of the nation will rise against them to right itself and to re-establish our reputation.

Gentlemen, I have ventured to speak to you in this way

because I am speaking from my heart. I know that there must be differences of opinion amongst us. I know it is very probable that on some matters of detail I may be wrong, and those with whom I act may be wrong, and that others whom we are in opposition to may be right. But this I am sure of, that the men, whoever they may be, and to whatever party they may belong, who are endeavouring by every means in their power to promote what they honestly believe to be for the honour and interests of the country, will receive at the hands of their countrymen generous appreciation and cordial support.

Parties receiving Copies of this Speech are particularly requested to give them every circulation in their power.

SPEECHES

OF

LORD RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL, M.P.,

AT HULL,

ON

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31ST AND NOVEMBER 1ST,

1881.

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SPEECH

OF

LORD RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL, M.P.,

AT THE

PUBLIC ROOMS, HULL,

ON

MONDAY, OCTOBER 31ST, 1881.

ON

THE IRISH POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

From the "Eastern Morning News" of November 1st, 1881.

LAST evening a meeting of the Conservative Party was held at the Public Rooms, Hull, to hear an address from Lord Randolph S. Churchill, M.P. The hall was filled with an audience of about 2,000 persons, and a large number of ladies were present. Lord Randolph Churchill and the prominent members of the Conservative Party were loudly cheered on entering the room. Dr. Rollit, the Chairman of the Conservative Party, presided, and there were present on the platform Sir Charles Legard, Bart., Mr. Jos. Atkinson, Major Brodrick, J.P., Mr. C. B. Bell (chairman North Myton Conservative Association), Mr. W. S. Bailey, J.P., Mr. R. Baxter (chairman South Myton Conservative Association), Mr. R. M. Craven, J.P. (ex-Sheriff), Dr. Dix, Alderman Denison, Mr. C. S. Eccles (chairman West Sculcoates Conservative Association), Mr. F. B. Grotrian, J.P., Major Goddard, Mr. W. R. King, J.P., Dr. King (ex-Mayor of Hull), Dr. Lunn, Mr. E. P. Maxsted, J.P., Mr. J. Stephenson, J.P., Mr. T. Turner, J.P., Mr. R. J. Wade, Major White, Mr. D. Wilson, J.P., Captain Brodrick, Councillor J. H. Gibson, Mr. C. Joy, Mr. Castle Kelsey, Captain Krüger, Major Pudsey, Mr. Josh. Harrison, Mr. Lumley Cook, Mr. E. T. Foster (Secretary Hull Trades' Council), Mr. J. H. Horsley, Captain Clarke, Mr.

R. G. Butts, Mr. H. J. Barrett, Mr. J. Briggs, Mr. F. Bilton, Mr. R. L. Cook, Captain Dibb, Mr. A. Ellershaw, Mr. W. Ellershaw, Mr. T. Farrell, B.A., Councillor Greasley, Mr. Wm. Horsley, Mr. E. Heslewood, Mr. W. H. H. Hutchinson, Mr. H. H. Hanson, Mr. H. A. Johnson, Mr. Jennings (President Hull Trades' Council), Mr. J. King, Mr. C. B. Lambert, Councillor Lambert, Mr. E. Leetham, Councillor Myers, Mr. S. B. Mason, Captain Peters, Mr. W. Peasegood, Mr. T. Reynoldson, Mr. W. T. Robinson, Mr. T. E. Sykes, Mr. T. H. Sissons, Mr. David Sissons, Mr. John Seaton, Mr. Robert Stephenson, &c.

The CHAIRMAN (Dr. Rollit), first referred to letters he had received from the Right Hon. James Lowther, M.P., and others, regretting their inability to be present. Mr. Lowther said: "I should be very glad to meet our Conservative friends in Hull, and upon some future occasion it will afford me much pleasure to do so, as I remember the great obligations the Conservative cause in North Lincolnshire owes to you and so many others of our Hull friends. Another year I would gladly pay a visit to Hull if you wish it." (Applause.) Dr. Rollit then said that the Conservative Party in Hull had been very recently honoured by the presence of the leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, Sir Stafford Northcote. (Applause.) The remembrance of the great party demonstration on that occasion was still fresh in their minds—(hear, hear)—and it had been the means not only of inspiriting the party in Hull, but—if that were possible—of strengthening the allegiance and loyalty of Conservatives to the chiefs of the great Constitutional Party in Parliament. (Loud applause.) Addresses from such men were of advantage, not only to the political party whose cause they advocated, but to the town, by raising the provincial standard of thought and expression on public questions. (Hear, hear.) He was very glad, therefore, to hear that the example set by the Conservative Party—who might claim to have broken the long chain of neglect of Hull by national politicians—(hear, hear)—was to be followed by their opponents, and that, in a visit from Lord Rosebery, the Liberals would have, in some measure, the advantages which the Conservatives had already enjoyed. (Hear, hear.) But the Conservatives might claim to have set their opponents not one, but two, such examples, for he had the honour and privilege of introducing to them to-night a Conservative nobleman, who by his display of that ability, dash, and daring which were characteristic of his great ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough, had done good service to the Conservative Party in the House of Commons. (Loud applause.) And it was not in the long past alone that the noble lord's family had served the State. Under the administration of the great Earl of Beaconsfield—(loud applause)—the Duke of Marlborough, as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, had given to that

unhappy country the blessings of peace and order by a firm and just administration of the law—(hear, hear)—while, by her womanly sympathy, the Duchess had won the hearts and feelings of the Irish people. (Loud applause.) He (Dr. Rollit) would not stay to point the contrast between the condition of Ireland then, and now. He had not, indeed, the time to refer to the inconsistency of a Ministry in which Mr Bright said that force was no remedy ; in which Mr. Chamberlain declared that it might be a remedy ; and in which Mr Gladstone affected to rely on moral force as applicable to rebels and barbarians. (Laughter.) The best commentary on such views, was, however, that the Ministry had been at last compelled to enforce their message of peace by the force of the sword, and to rely, in practice, on those great forces of civilisation—Her Majesty's Forces and the Police Force. (Loud laughter.) Passing this by, then, he would only remark that Lord Randolph Churchill had recognised the public obligations created by high birth and historic lineage, in his early self-devotion to the public service. (Hear, hear.) The House of Commons knew him nightly, and he set an example to many of his party by fighting, often single-handed, the battle of the Constitution. (Hear, hear.) Like Mr. Disraeli in his early days, and the Marquis of Salisbury as Lord Robert Cecil, he was the knight-errant of the Conservative Party, the Hotspur of the House of Commons, and one of the most rising statesmen of the day. (Loud applause.) It was, therefore, a great compliment to the Conservative Party in Hull that, after a long and laborious, but mountain-and-the-mouse-like session—(laughter)—Lord Randolph Churchill should visit and address them. (Applause.) That compliment would be acknowledged to-morrow by the Constitutional Club, and, to-night, he asked that vast audience of Conservatives to show their appreciation of it by according to the noble lord a most hearty and enthusiastic welcome. (Loud applause.)

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, who was received with loud cheering, said : Dr. Rollit, Ladies, and Gentlemen—It is a very great honour which you have done me in inviting me to your town, and in according me such a kind welcome, and I look upon it as a great advantage to be able to submit to you some opinions on the more pressing and interesting political questions of the moment. (Applause.) As your chairman has rightly told you, "the message of peace to Ireland" has been quickly followed by a message of war. (Cheers.) Ireland, instead of being the Arcadia which we were promised, is in a state of siege. (Cheers.) Mr. Gladstone has appealed to the country for their confidence and their support to enable him to carry on that war successfully. Well, I think it is our duty to examine the grounds on which such a claim is based. I ought to have said, perhaps, that Mr. Gladstone hardly takes the trouble to appeal. He claims our

support as a right, and I would say that it is our duty to examine the ground on which such a claim is based, and, if we arrive at the conclusion that for all the misery and lawlessness in Ireland Her Majesty's Government is primarily and directly responsible, and that much of it, or, indeed, the greater part of it, could have been averted, and that the continuance of the present Government in office means the recurrence of seditious agitation in Ireland, then I submit to you that it is our duty to repudiate Mr. Gladstone's claim, to refuse him our support, and to deny him our confidence. (Cheers.) Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Chamberlain, two very eminent statesmen—(laughter)—have recently been giving to the public their version of recent Irish history. Well, I will venture to give you mine, and I have every reason to believe that I am quite as well informed on the subject as they are. (Applause.) And I have one advantage over them—the one very great advantage over them—that I have no interest whatever in concealing the truth. (Cheers.) Of course, I do not think it matters much what Sir William Harcourt says. (Laughter.) It is quite impossible to look upon Sir William Harcourt as a serious politician, but Mr. Chamberlain, I admit, is a man of very different calibre, and his remarks must be considered with more respect. It will be in your recollection that during five years out of the six years in which the late Government held office the state of Ireland was one of profound peace and internal development. (Cheers.) During that time the last remaining Fenian prisoners were released—the last memories of the Fenian rebellion were blotted out. (Applause.) During that time the terrible Westmeath Act was allowed to expire, and the number of counties proclaimed under the Peace Preservation Act were reduced from twenty-eight to eight. (Cheers.) During that time the education question, which, as you well remember, had wrecked Mr. Gladstone's former Government, was settled, not only in the branch of University education, but in the far more important branch of intermediate education ; and it was settled in a manner conformable to the views of the Irish Catholics, and I think you will agree with me that it is no exaggeration to say that if it had not been for the almost supernatural activity of a very small knot of Irish members in the House of Commons, England would almost have forgotten the existence of Ireland—certainly would not have been aware of the existence of any alarming Irish difficulty. (Cheers.) Well, it is very useful to recall that period of tranquility. What would we not give to get it back again now? (Applause.) In the last year of the late Administration, in the year 1879, a disastrous famine threatened to devastate Ireland. Thedistress ensuing upon that famine was energetically dealt with, and the late Government may boast that, although the crisis was acute, and the danger great, not one single life was lost owing to starvation.

(Applause.) That famine, however, undoubtedly produced great misery, and a fine opportunity was afforded to the agitator to disturb the peace of Ireland. But the agitation in 1879 differed from all former Irish movements in this respect, that the leaders of the agitation were egged on and openly patronised by Mr. Gladstone—(cheers, interruption, and a voice "No")—by Lord Hartington, and by Mr. Bright, sworn Privy Councillors, and ex-Ministers of the Crown. (Cheers.) Mr. Gladstone had himself visited Ireland, and I would like that gentleman up there, who seems rather premature in expressing his disagreement—I would like him—I would take it as a great compliment if he would allow me to set before him, without interruption, a few facts. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Gladstone had himself visited Ireland, and had done his best there as well as in Midlothian to rouse the slumbering passions of an excitable race. (Cheers.) Mr. Bright had declared that Ireland would not get justice till "a united Ireland menaced England," and he had also declared that the land question which Mr. Parnell and Mr. Davitt were bringing to the front required to be dealt with "with a desperate determination;" and Mr. Gladstone had significantly reminded the Irish people of the great effects which the massacre of Manchester and the explosion of Clerkenwell had produced upon the English mind. (Cheers.) Now, recollect that all this time the character of Mr. Parnell's agitation was notorious. It was known by everyone to be an agitation against the rule of England. (Cheers.) Mr. Parnell's speeches had never varied in their character. From the first day that he began this movement he was always perfectly frank and open and candid. At any rate, in that respect nobody can throw a stone at him. (Applause.) It is the first time in the history of Ireland since the great revolution that a treasonable movement has received the countenance and the support of members of the Queen's Privy Council, and it is owing to this one striking feature that the movement has become so powerful, and that to-day it seriously threatens the authority of the Queen. (Applause.) Indeed, no one knew better than Mr. Parnell that his movement was hopeless so long as Lord Beaconsfield remained in power. (Cheers.) Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues, whatever may have been their faults, were not men who would dally or bargain with treason, and at the first signs of any seditious agitation that movement would have been nipped in the bud. (Cheers.) Mr. Parnell and Mr. Gladstone thereupon openly, and in the face of the day, joined forces. Animated by one common object—to destroy the Government of Lord Beaconsfield—(applause)—the Liberal candidates in all constituencies where there was an Irish vote were instructed by Lord Hartington not to be squeamish about taking the Home Rule pledge. (Laughter.) The whole Irish vote at the last election was cast solid in favour of the Liberal Government, and it has been ascer-

tained, by careful examination—it is not a very pleasant fact for the Liberals—that between 30 and 40 seats, practically making up the whole Liberal majority, which were won by the Liberal party, were won by the Irish vote. (Hear, hear.) Very well, Lord Beaconsfield's Government was eaten up—(laughter)—and Mr. Gladstone felt himself naturally bound to pay to his Irish confederates the price for their support which had placed him in power. The first item in that price was the non-renewal of the Peace Preservation Act, the second item was the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, and the third item was the Irish Land Act. But in order to settle the Irish land question in a manner conformable to the demands of the Land League, much preparation was necessary. Ireland even at that time was altogether too quiet and too peacable for Englishmen to see the necessity of agreeing to the demands of the Land Leaguers. For that purpose all the guarantees for order were abandoned by the Government; in spite of the warnings—friendly and disinterested warnings—that were offered by the Conservative party for the same purpose, the Compensation for Disturbance Bill was introduced, a measure prohibiting the payment of rent—for this was its practical effect for two years—and intended to excite all the dishonest appetites of the Irish, and to fill them with hopes of what they might obtain if only they would persevere. For the same reason, and for the same purpose, the Land League, whose character I maintain—and I defy contradiction—has never varied from the day of its formation, was allowed to grow, to extend its influence, and to become exceedingly powerful, and practically to supersede the Queen's Government. (Applause.) Mr. Chamberlain said at Liverpool the other day that the Land League had changed its character. (Laughter.) Well, now, that is one of those unblushing and indecent misrepresentations which always so frightfully disfigure Radical orations. (Great laughter.) The first cry that the Land League raised when the present Government came into office was "Hold the harvest," and their last dying yell was "No rent.' (Great laughter and applause.) There may be a difference between tweedledum and tweedledee, but between "hold the harvest" and "no rent" there is absolutely none, except this—that the first cry at the time it was raised was most valuable to the Radical party, and the second cry at the time it was raised would have been absolutely fatal. Therefore, Mr. Chamberlain audaciously asserts that the Land League has changed its character. (Applause) Well, for the same reason, to go back, the perpetration of murders and outrages, and horrible mutilations, were winked at by the Government during the whole of last winter. The country gentlemen, the magistrates, and the police were unmercifully snubbed by Mr. Forster whenever they ventured to express alarm or to show any activity in the repression of disorder. The missionaries

of the gospel of plunder were preparing the ground for Mr. Gladstone, and were not to be interfered with. The object of all this was to educate the English mind to the necessity of heroic remedies, and it was necessary that much blood should be spilt, and law and order should vanish, in order that Mr. Gladstone might come forward and properly fill the part of the greatest statesman and the greatest legislator of the age—the saviour of society. (Laughter.) All this is history. I have watched with the greatest attention the course of Irish affairs, assisted by some little knowledge of the people and the country, and I could, if necessary, support every statement I have made by a chain of damning facts. At the begining of this year Mr. Gladstone was of opinion that the ground was sufficiently prepared, and that it was necessary to put a check upon his somewhat too enthusiastic allies in Ireland. (Laughter.) Mr. Chamberlain, at Liverpool, used these remarkable words. He said, "I am prepared to admit that there may be times when it is the duty of a Liberal Government to assert the law." (Laughter.) Just so! When it is convenient the Radicals assert the law; when it is inconvenient, Down with the law—pillage, burn, slaughter, and destroy. (Applause.) I own I hardly expected so much cynical candour even from Mr. Chamberlain. Well, this was one of the times, and accordingly the Government professed alarm at the state of Ireland. They pretended to discover for the first time the true character of the Land league. They brought to the front the Dynamite Convention and the Assassination Press, and the ponderous Sir William Harcourt was made very useful in declaiming about these monstrosities, but at the same time to reassure their Irish friends that they did not mean any real mischief, Mr. Bright said at Birmingham that "Force was no remedy for lawlessness." Mr. Parnell and his friends were, as you know, prosecuted for illegal conspiracy before an Irish jury. The Government knew, and everybody in Ireland knew, that prosecution to be a screaming farce—(laughter)—there never was a chance of obtaining a conviction, but it served to throw dust into the eyes of the English people. (Applause.) Parliament was also summoned in the month of January, and the Government asked Parliament for extraordinary powers, and to allow them to suspend the Constitution in Ireland. Well, you are aware that the Conservative party gave them all they wanted. The Conservative party never doubted the good faith of the Government. They hardly even exercised their right of Parliamentry criticism, but there were some of the Conservative party who did doubt. (Applause.) I declared in the House of Commons my distrust of the Government, and my conviction that they had shown no title to such a mark of confidence on the part of Parliament as to allow them to suspend the Constitution, and I was anxious that their powers should be

limited for one year, in order that if it became necessary to renew the Coercion Act, Parliament might have an opportunity of reckoning with them, and calling them to account. Well, gentlemen, I was overruled by people for whose opinion I have great respect, and everything the Government asked for they got. Having now reassured the English mind, it was necessary again, in order to perfect their scheme, to reassure their Irish friends, who were begining to be a little alarmed. For this purpose, although Ireland was in conflagration from north to south, although murders, outrages, and mutilations were rife, although all justice, except Land League justice, was at an end, Mr. Forster, who had obtained this Coercion Act from Parliament by pledging himself to Parliament that he could and would put an end to this frightful state of things, arrested 35 insignificant persons—(laughter)—throughout the whole of Ireland, lodged them in Kilmainham Gaol, where they were fed on the best of fare—it is a fact—drank the best whiskey, received all their friends, read all the newspapers—wrote themselves in many of them—and lived altogether like gentlemen in a club, feeling convinced that, owing to the philanthropy of Mr. Forster, they had secured an impregnable situation in the affections of their fellow-countrymen. (Great laughter.) Well, gentlemen, the result of this policy was that the Coercion Act, which to English eyes was very formidable, was to the Irish divested of all its terrors. There was a perfect scramble amongst the village ruffians to get into Kilmainham, which was looked upon as the wicket gate to the House of Commons, and the murders, and the outrages, and the mutilations, and the tumults recommenced more blithely and more merrily than before, and have continued at high pressure up to the present day. (Great laughter.) Well, gentlemen, having now kicked the Irish people with the Coercion Act, Mr. Gladstone proceeded to correct them with the Land Act, and the gospel of plunder received the Royal Assent. (Laughter.) All the available time of Parliament was occupied in this process, and England and Scotland despairingly acquiesced, relying on the pledge of Mr. Gladstone that the message of peace which he had fabricated would quiet Ireland for generations. Well, Ireland, as you know, after the passing of the Act, exhibited no signs of pacification whatever. Disorder in that country was greater than before, the speeches of the agitators were, if possible, more violent and seditious, the denials of justice more open and flagrant, Mr. Gladstone's own Act—the Act which all the Radical party declared "no living man but he could have passed"—(laughter)—was laughed to scorn by a popularly elected convention in Dublin, the farmers were told to be very careful how they used it, to continue their repudiation of rent, to look upon it only as an instalment, and to remember that the ultimate object of their hopes was total separa-

tion from Great Britain. Mr. Gladstone now becomes very wroth. He begins to perceive that his Irish confederates are not playing fair. (Laughter.) He had fulfilled, as he considered, his part of the original iniquitous bargain, and it was the duty of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues to accept gratefully the booty which he had divided amongst them. As long as the Queen's laws were broken he did not care ; they were unjust laws. As long as the Queen's forces were routed and stoned by the mob, oh, he could bear it ; he was a man of peace. But the moment his own Act, "which no living man but he could have passed"—(laughter)—the moment his own Act was derided ; the moment his own Land Act, "which no living man but he could have suggested"—(laughter)—was menaced with "Boycotting" by the Land League, then the aspect of matters changes altogether. He now for the first time remembers that he has the might of England at his back, and he determines to attempt to crush his former friends, and we are now witnessing a life and death struggle between Her Majesty's Radical Government and the Irish National Land League. (Cheers.) The issue of that struggle will exactly resemble the celebrated mortal combat between the cats of Kilkenny. (Great laughter.) Both parties will expire. The Irish National Land League will succumb to the power of the Crown, and Her Majesty's Government, indicted, tried, and convicted at the bar of public opinion, will fall between the votes of the constituencies of England. (Cheers.) In the meantime Mr. Gladstone claims support, and he deprecates any inquiry into the origin of these evils. He remarked at Liverpool the other day that when a house is on fire people busy themselves in putting out the fire, and don't bother themselves about finding out the cause of the fire. Does Mr. Gladstone really think that the people of England are such fools as to believe that incendiaries are the proper parties to be entrusted with the extinction of conflagrations ? (Great laughter and applause.) Mr. Gladstone claims our support. Do you remember a few years ago another Government engaged in a struggle verging on war, in which the existence of this country might have been involved, appealed to Mr. Gladstone and his friends for their support during the crisis in order that England might speak to Europe with an unanimous voice ? Do you remember how that claim was met ? It was met with unflinching, with fierce, and with relentless opposition on the part of Mr. Gladstone. (Great applause.) Measure for measure is a stern but just rule. (Cheers.) Yet I would not advocate its adoption now, were I not convinced that the object of the Government is only to restore a semblance of order in Ireland, and that if political exigencies made it necessary they would not scruple to allow even a worse agitation to recommence. Mark you, the Irish landlords under the new Land Act are reduced to the position of mortgagees. They are no

longer owners. Well, suppose order is temporarily restored in Ireland, under the Land Acts rents will be fixed before a year or two is out. As sure as you are sitting there there will be a cry in Ireland against allowing money to go out of the country for the support of idle mortgagees. A fresh agitation will be commenced, Parliament will be drawing to a close, and Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues, in order to buy the Irish vote, and to defeat the Conservative party at the poll, will be the first to encourage and to pander to that agitation. (Cheers.) And the first sign of what I am telling you is true—the first sign of it will be whether the Government asks Parliament, or does not ask Parliament, to renew the Coercion Act next session, which expires in September 1882. That will be the barometer by which you will be able to judge what will be the policy of the Government in Ireland as regards seditious agitation. Mr. Parnell in his way is much more merciful than Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Parnell would destroy landlords in Ireland at one blow. Mr. Gladstone prefers to kill them inch by inch, always leaving a little something which shall form the nucleus and basis of some fresh predatory agitation, which may be to the advantage of the Liberal party. (Applause.) You can trace it perfectly well in the Act of 1870 and in the Act of 1881. Mr. Parnell would cut the throat of his victim at once. Mr. Gladstone prefers to shear him closely and cruelly, not caring how much the victim is scarred, or injured, or wounded, as long as a spark of life remains which may nourish a new fleece for the Liberal party to shear. (Applause.) Mr. Parnell cries, Mr. Gladstone at Leeds preaches, the gospel of plunder. The Prime Minister professes to be an eminent Free Trader, but, in preaching the gospel of plunder, he is a rigid monopolist. (Laughter.) Mr. Gladstone may rob a church, but Mr. Parnell must not look over the wall. (Renewed laughter.) What was the Land Act of 1870 but the gospel of plunder? What was the disendowment of the Irish Church but the gospel of plunder? (Cheers.) What was the Compensation for Disturbance Bill but the gospel of plunder? And, finally, what was the Land Act of 1881 but the gospel, epistles, and new testament of plunder all combined?—(great laughter)—and of these four robberies Mr. Gladstone has been the apostle. Really, one may truly say that, in the diffusion of this novel gospel of plunder, Davitt planted, Parnell watered, but Gladstone gave the increase. (Great laughter and cheers.) The planter and the waterer are laid by their heels in prison, but the man for whose benefit all these wild scenes have been enacted, for whose triumph whole hecatombs of victims have been immolated, the great fructifier of this crop of dragon's teeth, has been Mr. Gladstone, and that is Mr. Gladstone's notion of the divine right of justice. I hope I am not dealing with this question too long. It is a question which cannot be analysed too deeply by the con-

stituencies. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Gladstone has tried two experiments with Ireland—conciliation and coercion. He has been obliged to drop conciliation and to resort to coercion, Well, now, there are two ways of administering coercion. You may administer it firmly, but without passion, or you may administer it savagely, endeavouring to excite a war of races. (Applause.) Mr. Gladstone has resorted to coercion, I firmly believe, not from any desire to see Ireland permanently pacified, but in a paroxysm of rage and disappointment, and he has adopted the latter most unfortunate method, which will leave traces of its effects for years and years upon the Irish mind. Mark, now, gentlemen—Mr. Gladstone, having determined to arrest Mr. Parnell, goes to Leeds, and there winds himself up to surpass himself almost in vituperation of Mr. Parnell, and to excite against him the passion of the English people. Well, now, I need scarcely say that I have not a spark of sympathy for Mr. Parnell. No one fears his influence in Ireland more than I do, no one detests his politics more than I do ; but this, gentlemen, I will admit, that I have a great affection for the Irish people, and there is nothing I would not do, and, I am sure, nothing you would not do, to see Ireland prosperous and happy. (Cheers.) But we must remember this unfortunate circumstance, that Mr. Parnell is as much the idol of the Irish people as Mr. Gladstone is of the Liberal party. Indeed, I may say that he is a great deal more so, because there are very few of the Irish nation who do not gladly believe Mr. Parnell, whereas there are a great many of the Liberal party who hate and fear Mr. Gladstone —(hear, hear)—and all the rage and passion excited against Mr. Parnell in this country is quickly taken up and responded to by three-fourths of the Irish nation. But that was not enough for Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Parnell being arrested, within three hours of the arrest Mr. Gladstone comes down to the Guildhall and there rouses—as he so well knows how to do—the frantic applause by announcing that arrest to his audience. Never, I venture to say, in the whole course of English history was such an indecent step ever taken by a Minister before. After all, what was the arrest ? What was it that Mr. Gladstone shonld give it this extraordinary importance ? It was the mere act of the Executive Government, which had only been too disgracefully delayed. (Applause.) Can you conceive anything more likely to increase the influence of Mr. Parnell and to endear him to his fellow-countrymen than such an act as that on the part of the Prime Minister ? But that is not enough. Mr. Gladstone the other day (Thursday) forgot altogether the dignity of his office of Prime Minister. Standing in the classic halls of Knowsley, addressing the leading merchants of Liverpool, he positively crowed like a little child because he had been elected a freeman of the city of Dublin and Mr. Parnell had not been elected. (Great laughter.) Well, gentlemen, I say that

such a prostitution of Ministerial dignity was enough to have made the late Lord Derby turn in his grave, and I would not have alluded to such a ridiculous event if it had not been that I wish to show you how purely personal is this conflict between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell, and how little the interests of either England or Ireland occupy Mr. Gladstone's mind. We must never forget that, whether by conciliation or otherwise, our object is to unite Ireland to England, as Scotland and as Wales have been united ; and the Minister who, under the pretence of restoring order, excites a war of races, indefinitely postpones that real and solid union. He commits a crime almost unpardonable in its nature. (Applause.) There is another feature in this developement of energy on the part of the Government which is most deplorable. If you are to supress a popular movement, and if you are to arrest the leader of a popular movement, you will agree with me that you cannot be too careful to act in a manner which will not allow of your motives being suspected by the ignorant and the foolish dupes who are led away. Well, Mr. Gladstone has not been careful in this matter. His most unnecessary denunciation of Mr. Parnell at Leeds forced Mr. Parnell to make a savage retort, and in that dialogue of abuse the impartial critic will, I think, award the prize to Mr. Parnell. Certainly these two men know each other's measure most precisely. (Great laughter. However, immediately after the reply Mr Parnell was arrested What interpretation, I ask you, can the excitable Irish people put upon that arrest, except that it was dictated by vindictive and ungenerous motives, and I must remark upon this, because I remarked upon it in the House of Commons last session, to the intense indignation of Mr. Forster, that Mr. Davitt and Mr. Dillon were not arrested until they had made a personal attack upon Mr. Forster. Well, now, I say these are administrative blunders producing the worst effects, and tending to exasperate and to increase the acuteness of the crisis. (Hear, hear.) I pass to another point, and a much more serious one. Mr. Gladstone was not content with denouncing Mr. Parnell at Leeds. He condescended to an act which shows a greater amount of political profligacy than I had thought possible. It is, I am thankful to say, the accepted rule in this country that there is nothing so base or so cowardly as to kick a man who is down. Yet this is what Mr. Gladstone was not ashamed to do. He denounced the Irish landlords for their apathy in not supporting the Government in the execution of the law. In the first place the charge is absolutely false ; and, in the second place, if it were true, it would be absolutely unjustifiable. The Irish landlords have been loyal to this Government beyond belief. They have formed themselves into associations for the purpose of defeating the Land League. They have continued to discharge their duties as magistrates and

as Poor Law Guardians. Numbers of them have, in peril of their lives, continued to reside on their estates, many of them quite unprotected, striving by word and by deed to keep their people from the crimes of the Land League. During the distress they borrowed money from the Government for the purpose of finding employment for the starving people. Their cattle have been mutilated, their ricks have been burnt, their farms have been burnt, their rents have been unpaid. Many of them had had their agents and their bailiffs shot at and wounded. Some of them, even of their own number, had fallen—like Lord Mountmorres—to the bullet of the assassin, and notwithstanding all these frightful disasters, they have never flinched from the performance of the irduty, and never failed to raise their voices against the disturbance of order. Further, gentlemen, they have cheerfully acepted the Land Act, which deprives them of much of the value of their property, and of all the ownership. And this is their reward from the Prime Minister of England—to be accused by him, falsely, before 25,000 Englishmen, where there was none to defend them, of being too cowardly to support the Government. I say, gentlemen, that it is time to do more than remonstrate, when Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues, and his party—those children of Revolution, those robbers of churches, those plunderers of classes, those destroyers of property, those friends of the lawless, those foes of the loyal—falsely and wickedly libelled before the people of this country a body of men who have been more than faithful to the throne, and who, during three generations, have spent their lives—they and their ancestors before them—in maintaining and in defending the union between Ireland and Great Britain. (Great cheering.) But, gentlemen, even if that charge be true, it would be absolutely unjustifiable. What title, I should like to know, has the present Government to the support of the Irish landlords? Mr. Gladstone went directly in the face of their advice and experience when he refused to renew the Peace Preservation Act. He tried to pass a Bill through Parliament which would have deprived them of any income for two years, although at the time many of them were so embarrassed by the distress, by the non-payment of rent, and by the remission of rent, that they did not know where to turn to pay the mortgages and charges which were due by them. He declared that the laws by which the title to their property was secured were unjust laws. He declared that a sentence of eviction was equivalent to a sentence of starvation, and that the Irish landlords had pronounced 15,000 of such sentences. He compared them, when he introduced the Land Bill, to the slaveowners of Jamaica, and—still worse—ruffians who robbed a poor man on the highway, and in every way in which ingenuity could suggest or decency permitted he held them up to opprobrium. And now, when they are beaten to the ground by an Act which confiscates

the greater portion of their property without any compensation but when, nevertheless, they are bravely struggling for existence with the Land League agitators at their throats, Mr. Gladstone comes up and deals them this savage and treacherous kick (Applause.) I fear not to say that a man, and a Prime Minister, who could act in such a manner towards a body of the Queen's subjects, has attained the lowest depth of political cowardice and turpitude. (Applause.) And now Mr. Gladstone is kind enough to inform us that, for the purpose of governing Ireland, the resources of civilisation are not yet exhausted. (Laughter.) "What can he mean?" I said to myself, when I read that phrase of his in the newspapers; "he cannot possibly mean coercion. No pure high-minded Radical would call coercion a resource of civlisation Does he mean some new Land Act, or some Home Rule Act, or some novel concession to treason or to plunder? The best and speediest resourse of civilisation that I know of would be a change of Government. (Cheers and laughter.) But Mr. Gladstone cannot possibly mean that." Well, I could not arrive at any conclusion about the meaning of this expression of his till I read in the newspapers the next day that Mr. Herbert Gladstone had announced to his delighted constituency that he was going over to Ireland—(laughter)—to assist Mr. Forster in the pacification of that country, to strengthen the hands of that weak-minded man of peace, and, if necessary, to supersede him in his office—(laughter and applause)—a second message of peace to Ireland (Great laughter.) Mr. Gladstone instals his son in Dublin Castle Is it for this that the British Association has deliberated for a week at York? Is it for this that the Social Science Congress has sat for a week in Dublin? Is this the supreme discovery of all the learned and the wise, that the resources of civilisation and Mr Herbert Gladstone are identical. (Great laughter.) Ireland is to leap from the frying-pan into the fire, and, having escaped from the misgovernment of a philanthropist from Bradford, it is to be tossed into the arms and handed over to the mercies of a political flipperty-jibbet. (Great laughter.) I have very little doubt that Her Majesty's Government have entered into a new conspiracy for the further pacification of Ireland by plunder, only they do not propose to bid as high as Mr. Parnell; and, as Mr. Parnell and the Land League were outbidding them, they have arrested the former and suppressed the latter. I fear greatly that the British Parliament—I wish to direct your attention particularly to this matter—I fear greatly that the British Parliament has been hoodwinked. We thought when we were establishing a Court of the Land Commission that we were establishing what would be, in every sense of the word, a court of justice. I fear that is not to be so. I doubt very much whether the landlords will get justice in that Court. I do not think it is intended that that Court shall

be a judicial body. It is intended that that Court shall be a department of the Executive Government, charged with the duty of reducing rents ; and the Government and the Commission have only got themselves to blame if that construction is put on their acts. Now, mark what was the original composition of that Court. The Government appointed as judges two of the most extreme men whom they could have selected all through Ireland—men whose opinions on the land question were notorious. Suppose that it was necessary in this country to appoint a commission—an executive commission—to regulate the dealings between employer and employed in all our mining industries, and suppose the Government appointed as judges on that Commission Mr. Macdonald and Mr. Burt. I do not want to say anything against those two gentlemen, except this, that no one would think that the interests of the employers were not placed in rather a hazardous position. (Applause) Well, suppose again that it was necessary to appoint a Commission to determine how much property was necessary for the support of the Church of England, and that Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Ashton Dilke were the judges on that Commission. Well, I do not think anybody would suppose that the Church of England was going to get much justice. That is exactly analogous to the action of the Government in the composition of this Land Commission. But the Lord-Lieutenant has had to appoint several Sub-Commissioners. All of these have been taken from the tenants' party, so that at the first blush of the matter, if the landlords are to have their case fairly considered —and that was the intention of the British Parliament—the judges will have to be almost more than human. But the action of the Commission itself fills me with suspicion. The moment they were legally appointed, they issued a manifesto to the Irish people telling the farmers what it was in their power to do for them, setting forth the great benefits which the Act conferred on them, and they invited them all to come into Court. Well, now bring that home to this country again. Supposing, on the passing of the Employers' Liability Act, the High Court of Justice of this country had issued a circular to all the employed of this country, setting forth the benefits which the Act conferred on the employed, would not you consider that the High Court of Justice was rather abandoning its judicial character, and was stimulating litigation ? That is precisely what the Land Court in Ireland has done. But that was not enough. On the first day of the opening of that Court, the presiding judge delivered from the Bench what was nothing more or less than a political harangue, again setting forth all the benefits which the Act conferred upon the Irish tenants, and, by implication of course, setting forth the merits of the Government which had passed the Act ; and I observe that during the course of that address, that political harangue, the

learned judge frequently elicited the loud applause of his audience A pretty scene for a court of justice! And further, I commend this to anyone accustomed to courts of law, the learned judge delivered the judgment of the Court upon two most important and most intricate points of the Land Act before a single case had been submitted to him, and before a single argument of any learned counsel had been heard. So I do not think the Commission can justly complain if the owners of property in Ireland—persons who have a great interest at stake, and everything to lose—are disposed to deny altogether the judicial character of the Land Commission. I also observe that at the first opening of that Court Mr. Herbert Gladstone, or, as we may now call him, the "resources of civilisation"—(laughter)—occupied a seat on the bench. Depend upon it, when the Registrar of the Land Commissioners' Court declared "that the Court of the Land League was now open," he committed no *lapsus linguæ*, he perpetrated no Irish blunder; he stated what is a grim reality. (Applause.) Would you believe it possible that there is at the present time in every Post Office in Ireland a huge placard, issued by order of the Land Commissioners, circulated by the Executive Government, headed with large letters, "Advantages conferred on the Irish tenants by the Land Act." Was such a step ever taken in the history of this country by a Court of Justice before? I think you will agree with me that one is not extravagant in supposing that Irish landlords will not be treated in that Court as parties on an equality with the tenants. They will be treated as prisoners at the bar. Well, you will have seen, I dare say, in the newspapers, that Archbishop Croke, the celebrated Roman Catholic Prelate in Ireland, has abandoned the Land League after having been closeted for two hours with Mr. Forster. It is to my mind indisputable that Mr. Forster detached that eminent prelate from the Land League by giving him assurances, not to say pledges, that the action of the Land Commissioners would be to reduce rents largely throughout Ireland. Very well, if that is so, if the Land Commission is not to be a Court of Justice, as we understand the term, but a department of the Executive Government charged with the duty of reducing rents throughout Ireland as largely as decency will permit, what I want to know is the difference between Her Majesty's Radical Government and its organisation and the Irish National Land Leauge and its organisation. There is no difference of principle whatever. It is a difference of degree, and, considering the position of the parties, the difference is microscopical. According to Her Majesty's Government, if a robber, breaking into your house, sees ten sovereigns lying on the table, and steals five of them, and leaves five, he is no robber, but an enlightened arbitrator justly dividing property. (Great laughter.) But if he steals the whole

ten sovereigns, then he is a criminal of the deepest dye, to be punished with the utmost rigour of the law. But, to speak seriously, what is the position, I ask you, of property in this country—property, which is the foundation stone of all modern society—if principles such as these are to be applied to it? On all these grounds, I do submit to you that the conflict between Her Majesty's Government and the Irish National Land League the conflict between Mr. Gladstone and Mr Parnell—is a conflict between pot and kettle—(cheers)—and that we shall act wisely in repudiating Mr. Gladstone's claim upon us for our support, in holding ourselves entirely aloof, and in preserving a rigid neutrality. We can have neither part nor lot in the frightful responsibility which now oppresses Her Majesty's Government. (Applause.) They have plunged Ireland into disorder and anarchy for their own purposes. They are now obliged to have recourse to the most arbitrary measures for the purpose of restoring even a semblance of government and law, and if we rush in hastily now, and unreflectingly, to condone the guilty past, and to approve of the action of the Government at the eleventh hour against the Irish people, the Liberals themselves will be the first to proclaim to Ireland that they were forced to take these steps, owing to the clamour of the Conservative party. (Applause.) We believe that the interests of the empire are bound up with the future of the Conservative party—(applause)—and, viewing the exceeding magnitude of those interests to humanity at large, we should not be justified in imperilling that future by gratuitously involving ourselves in the odium which must attach to the recourse to arbitrary power, more especially if we consider that if the Conservatives had been in power no such unconstitutional acts would have been necessary, and that the necessity for them has arisen from the reckless determination of the Radical party to defeat and to humiliate the Conservative party. (Cheers.) I feel that I owe you an apology for having trespassed upon your patience so long. I have confined my remarks this evening to one question—the question of the moment. For the last eighteen months the gaze of England has been anxiously and painfully rivetted upon Ireland. Not for one single instant have we been able to divert our attention to other matters. Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues, by slander, by misrepresentation, even by positive falsehood, contrived to turn away the hearts of the people of this country from Lord Beaconsfield and his policy; but there must be many now of those who were so turned, bitterly and regretfully reminding themselves that of all these evils Lord Beaconsfield foretold would be the result of the triumph of Mr. Gladstone. What is the position of those two men now? Lord Beaconsfield slumbers in an honoured grave in Hughenden Churchyard. His memory is cherished by a Sovereign and her people. His genius

and his career will for long be fresh in the minds of succeeding generations, and his name is ineradicably stamped upon the pages of fame as that of a Minister who loved his country beyond all things, and who while he was in power kept Britain united and made her great. Mr. Gladstone on the other hand, the conqueror and the survivor—what of him? He seats himself on thrones of green and gold in Leeds Town Hall; he runs greedily after addresses in gold boxes, proffered by obsequious and by servile Lord Mayors; he is escorted through the streets by multitudes of well-drilled caucuses, waving torches and shouting loud hosannas, and, like King Herod upon his throne, he may imagine that his glory also is immortal. But I know well that if his Government continue long, we shall soon be within a measurable distance of the day when, with an empire disintegrated at home and tottering abroad, with our commerce waning, with our industries decayed, dependent for all necessaries of life on the bounty or cupidity of the foreigner, with the mass of our labour—skilled and unskilled—driven by free imports to foreign shores—(applause)—with our arms defeated and with our flag disgraced, with the spectres of Communism and Revolution hanging over this once peaceful country, his name will never be uttered by any patriotic Englishman without deep and bitter condemnation; and upon him will be pronounced the irrevocable and fatal verdict, that throughout the whole of his long career, in spite of his great opportunities, in spite of his marvellous gifts, he has been animated by no true love of country, by no real loyalty to the Throne, not even by any fidelity to party—Conservatives, Peelites, Whigs, he has courted and deserted them all in turn—but ever and always by a consuming desire for the gratification of personal vanity, and by an inextinguishable lust for momentary renown, no matter at what cost, or by what measures, it was achieved. (Applause.) That is my case for the prosecution. That is my indictment against Her Majesty's Government, which I will bring up against them in season and out of season until the hour for giving the verdict shall have sounded. For the true meaning, I take it, of the meeting to-night, which I am most grateful for having had the opportunity of addressing, and the true meaning of similar gatherings which have taken place in various parts of the country is this—that we, the Tory party, are resolved by united and persevering efforts, efforts which do not recognise defeat, and which do not know of despair—(cheers)—to pass on to those who shall come after us, uninjured, undiminished, and unshorn, the same priceless inheritance which we have received from those who have gone before, the same wide extent of empire, the same measure of civil and religious liberty, the same union of races and of classes and of interests, the same respect for law aud order, property, religion, and morality; and this is our highest

ambition, this our brightest dream, that, as in the past, so now and in the future, through the countless ages during which the world yet may roll, England shall remain the ornament of Christendom, the refuge of the oppressed, and the home of the happy and the free. (Cheers.)

Sir CHARLES LEGARD, Bart., who was loudly cheered on rising, proposed a vote of thanks to Lord Randolph Churchill. He was obliged for the warm and hearty reception accorded to himself, but assured the meeting he gladly attended to support the Conservative cause, which was led with such conspicuous ability by their president, Dr. Rollit—(cheers)—and he also came especially to support his noble friend Lord Randolph Churchill. (Cheers.) It was not for him on this occasion, and in Lord Randolph's presence, to speak of his lordship's ability and eloquence, for they had had a sample of it that night, which he thought they would all endorse as being worthy of any statesman in this country. (Cheers.) But this at least he might say, that it was the opinion, not only of himself, but of many experienced politicians, that Lord Randolph Churchill was one of the most rising men of the day. (Cheers.) Lord Churchill had shown the greatest acumen, skill, and ability in the attacks he had made on the Government in Parliament during the last two sessions, and to find himself abused by the Radical Party must be the greatest satisfaction he could have, for the simple reason that if he had not been a skilful critic and a dangerous opponent they would not have cared to pour as they had done the whole vials of their wrath upon his head. (Cheers.) The present demonstration, following so closely upon the one at the Circus, at which Sir Stafford Northcote attended, plainly showed that although the Conservative party in the House of Commons, in Hull, and in some other parts of the country, were in a minority, at any rate in this town the party was full of life, strength, and vigour, and was again becoming so popular and powerful that, unlike the neighbouring town of Leeds, it did not require either the electric light or a torchlight procession to attract the people. (Applause.) They knew a waning cause required to be replenished and upheld, and this was so at Leeds; and after the rough usage of the Government during the past twelvemonths at the hands of the electors of Coventry, St. Ives, Knaresborough, Preston, North Durham, and North Lincoln—(cheers)—it was almost necessary for the Radical party to make a great show; and this was done by putting their hands into their own pockets, and also into the pockets of the Conservative ratepayers of Leeds. But although the path of the Prime Minister was lighted up, and there were illuminations, still the unfortunate policy of Her Majesty's Government in the Transvaal and Ireland shone forth. Above all the applause and cheers of the people of Leeds and Glasgow could

be seen the terrible spectre of a brave general—Sir George Colley —and a noble band of heroes dying at Majuba Hill, and their death unavenged. (Cheers.) This formed a dark page in English history, and a serious stumbling-block for the Liberal Government, and it must be remembered other nations did not look at these events through Sir William Harcourt's spectacles—they saw the country dishonoured and nothing retrieved in a way becoming a great nation. And he must say that Sir William Harcourt, in speaking at Glasgow and casting the blame of Majuba on a dead general, uttered one of the most unworthy sentences that ever fell from the lips of a Minister of the Crown. (Applause.) In his (Sir Charles's) opinion, the Government had a great deal to answer for in the course they had pursued after declaring, on January 6th, that they were going to put down a rising in the Transvaal. (Applause.) Sir Charles, referring to Mr. Gladstone at Leeds, observed, slightly altertng a well-known verse :

> Towler and Jowler, howlers all,
> No single tongue was mute,
> Gladstone gave the note, and lo
> The whole pack followed suit !

(laughter and cheers)—and last week they witnessed one of the strangest events in the history of this country. They had four Cabinet Ministers deluging the country with their speeches, and how did these four go about ? They were not carried on the shoulders of the people—nothing of the sort. They were guarded by detectives and policemen. (Applause.) After referring to the Irish question, which had been so forcibly put before the meeting by Lord Randolph, Sir Charles said he could only imagine from the present great meeting that the Conservative party in Hull were putting their shoulders to the wheel, and meant at any rate to gain one seat at the next election. (Cheers.) He concluded by moving "That the most hearty thanks of this meeting of the members of the Hull Conservative Association, of the Conservative Ward Associations, and of the Hull Constitutional Club, be given to Lord Randolph Churchill, M.P., for the very admirable address which he has delivered, and for his able, energetic, and eloquent advocacy of Conservative and Constitutional principles in and out of the House of Commons."

Dr. KING, ex-Mayor of Hull, seconded the motion. He referred briefly to the disordered state of Ireland, and said that Lord Churchill's eloquent speech, which he characterised as a very remarkable one, must have carried conviction to many who had not thought much of the matter before, as to who was responsible for the serious condition of affairs. He was sure they would give his Lordship credit for having most carefully watched events, and for not allowing a single circumstance to escape him which could be brought against his political oponents. Lord Churchill had stated

his case for the prosecution ; and he was quite sure that they would admit that no advocate could have stated a case with more ability than his Lordship had done. They listened only a short time ago to a statesman of age and experience. It was the general who formed his plans in the closet, and who carefully weighed every word before he expressed it, but in the actual contest they must best depend upon those who, like his Lordship, had the dash, the ability, and the power to deal with facts. The marshal politician must have the dash of the free lance, as well as the ability of a commander. (Cheers.)

Mr. R. M. CRAVEN, J.P. (ex-Sheriff), in supporting the vote of thanks, said that although called on unexpectedly England expected every man to do his duty, and, as he was under the orders of the chairman, he obeyed. He agreed with Dr. King that Lord Churchill's address was a remarkable one, and, in his opinion, there was a great future before his lordship. (Applause.) He was destined to be in the front ranks of Conservatism. (Hear, hear.) A more severe and scathing indictment of a Government and the Premier he never heard. He heartily and cordially endorsed all that had been said by the proposer of the motion, which he had the greatest pleasure in supporting. (Loud applause.)

Mr. FOSTER (a working man), the Secretary of the Trades' Council, said that he desired it to be distinctly understood that he was not present as an official of, or as being connected with, the Trades' Council which was a non-political body. He had no authotity to represent it—(hear, hear)—but, speaking for himself, and personally, and for large numbers of working men, he said that there was very much in Lord Randolph Churchill's speech and in the principles of Conservatism which they could not but heartily approve. (Loud applause.)

Mr. LUMLEY COOK (Hon. Sec. of the Central Association), who was received with great applause, briefly seconded the resolution. He alluded to a bill circulated on the walls of the Borough vilifying the memory of the illustrious ancestor of the noble lord, the hero of Blenheim, as evidently emanating from the same individual faction which had gloried in the flag of England being dragged through the dust by the Boers in the Transvaal. Whatever they could do in the present, it was not even in their power to sully the deeds of their glorious ancestors, or tear from the page of history the brilliant achievements of the first Duke of Marlborough. He sincerely hoped that it would not be long before they again had the pleasure of listening to another eloquent speech from Lord Randolph Churchill. (Applause.)

The vote of thanks was then put by Dr. Rollit to the meeting and carried unanimously, first by a show of hands of the vast audience, and then by their loud and long acclamations.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, in responding to the vote of

thanks, said that he was horified to find that he had detained them for more than an hour-and-a-half, and he felt that so far from them owing him any thanks, it was he who owed them thanks for having trespassed upon their time for so long. (A voice : "We will sit here another hour yet.") He could only say that he looked upon it as the greatest possible honour to be invited to this great town and this great commercial centre. He need scarcely say that the approval with which they seemed to have met most of the views he had expressed, would be of the greatest possible encouragement to him in persevering in them, and in producing them on other occasions elsewhere. (Great applause.) He would ask them to join in a unanimous vote of thanks to the Chairman of the evening, Dr. Rollit, whose zeal for the Conservative cause was not confined to Hull, whose efforts in the North Lincolnshire election greatly contributed to the success of Mr. Lowther, and to whom the Conservative party in Hull and the country was under a debt of gratitude. (Loud applause.)

The vote of thanks to Dr. Rollit was seconded by

Mr. E. P. MAXSTED, J.P., who said that it must strike all the Conservatives in Hull, that with Dr. Rollit as the Chairman they had got the right man in the right place. (Hear, hear.) It put new blood into them to have gentlemen like Dr. Rollit coming forward and inviting the great, the distinguished, the noble, and the eloquent men of our country to come to Hull and address them, as had never been done before. (Applause.) And the electors of Hull ought to return the compliment by sending two Conservative members to represent the constituency. (Loud applause.)

The motion was carried with great acclamation.

Dr. ROLLIT briefly responded, saying that the gratification of presiding over such immense gatherings of Conservatives was the most ample return for any services he might have rendered to the Conservative party. (Hear, hear.)

Dr. ROLLIT then called for three cheers for Lord Randolph Churchill, which were given with the greatest enthusiasm, and this great meeting terminated.

SPEECH

OF

LORD RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL, M.P.,

TO THE

CONSTITUTIONAL CLUB, HULL,

ON

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST, 1881.

From the "Eastern Morning News" of November 2nd, 1881.

LAST night the inaugural dinner of the Hull Constitutional Club was held, Major Brodrick, J.P., the President, in the chair. The president was supported, amongst others, by Lord R. Churchill, M.P., Sir Charles Legard, Bart., A. K. Rollit, LL.D., D.C.L., F. B. Grotrian, J.P., Rev. T. J. Lewis, M.A., W. S. Bailey, J.P., W. Ellershaw, Lumley Cook, W. C. Leng *(Sheffield Daily Telegraph)*, Captain Hill (late 30th Regiment), Lieut.-Colonel Saner, J.P., W. T. Dibb, Alderman King, J.P. (ex-Mayor), R. M. Craven, J.P. (ex-Sheriff), Major Goddard, Major Pudsey, E. P. Maxsted, J.P., H. C. Gleadow, Dr. Dix, W. R. King, J.P., Capt. W. S. Brodrick, J. D. Holmes, J.P., C. B. Bell (chairman North Myton Ward Conservative Association), C. S. Eccles (chairman West Sculcoates Ward Conservative Association), R. Baxter (chairman South Myton Ward Conservative Association), F. Clark, Herbert Harrison, E. Heslewood, B. Whitaker, C. Kuhling, A. Hodgson, T. H. Nassau, H. A. Jessop, H. A. Johnson, F. Sutton, J. H. Fisher, M. Bean, A. E. Pearson, Captain J. H. Peters, Major White, F. S. Kelsey, J. A. Chambers, J. Campbell Thompson, C. Hargitt Johnson, T. W. Leyworth, G. Martinson, Russell Starr, F. W. Starr, E. Starr, J. L. Kidd, W. Peasegood, J. Winkley, F. Winkley, T. Ely Sykes, Alderman Denison, G. Krause, Ph.D., R. Toogood, R. S. Hart, F. H. Pearson, T. H. Theilmann, George Cowan, E. Barkworth, B. Barton, Councillor Rollit, Councillor Myers, T. Farrell, B.A., J. Grindell, A. H. H. Robinson, M.A., W. B. Jameson, G. H. Lowridge, Captain W. H.

Wellsted, James Brown, J. Wacholder, H. Hanson, Dr. H Thompson, J. Turner (Ulceby), W. Reynolds, F. Bilton, J. Hal Sissons, R. Stephenson, C. W. Ansell, W. Beckett, Captain G. H Clarke, J. L. Read, A. Ellershaw, H. P. Daly, J. Horsley, L Stephenson, J. H. Easton, C. Kelsey, D. Bantoft (Selby), W. H. H Hutchinson, C. Ringrose (Cottingham), W. Sinclair, D. Cattley H. Moor, C. Moor, F. Good, J. B. Willows, H. Holt, S. B. Mason W. W. Bean, H. Wilson, G. T. Wilson, Dr. Sawdon, T. Reynold son, Captain R. L. Stone, &c.

About 150 guests sat down to dinner.

The PRESIDENT proposed "The Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the rest of the Royal Family."

Councillor LAMBERT (the hon. treasurer to the Club, and vice-chairman), proposed "The Archbishop and Clergy of the Diocese," to which the Rev. T. J. LEWIS, M.A., responded.

Dr. DIX submitted the toast of "The Army, Navy, and Auxiliary Forces," and Captain Hill (late 30th Regiment), Major Goddard (1st East York Rifle Volunteers), and Major Pudsey (2nd East York Artillery Volunteers) responded.

Dr. ROLLIT (Chairman of the Conservative party), briefly but eulogistically proposed "The Houses of Lords and Commons, and the health of Lord Randolph Churchill," remarking that under any circumstances, it was an honour to be asked to propose such an important toast as that of the Houses of Parliament; but that honour was greatly increased when it was associated with the name of a noble lord who was a distinguished ornament of the House of Commons, and closely connected—in history, and by the ties of family—with the other House of the Legislature. (Applause.) He acknowledged, in eloquent terms, the services of Lord Randolph Churchill to the Conservative party in Parliament and the obligation under which he had placed the party in Hull by the address which he had delivered the previous evening. (Applause.)

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, who was received with great applause, said: Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I own I feel myself to be in some considerable difficulty in replying to the toast which Dr. Rollit has proposed, on two grounds. In the first place, on account of the terms—far too flattering—in which Dr. Rollit has been kind enough to couple my name with this toast. I am more accustomed, somehow or other, to have to respond to what is the reverse of praise—(laughter)—and I cannot help feeling that the amount of praise which Dr. Rollit has been kind enough to shower on me is quite as undeserved as the amount of abuse which I have often had to respond to. (Laughter.) On the other hand, I am also in some difficulty in trying to do justice to the Houses of Lords and Commons. I have not the honour of a sufficiently intimate acquaintance with the composition of the

House of Lords, or with its procedure, to enable me to respond satisfactorily for that august assembly, but have every reason to believe, from what we have recently seen, that the House of Lords is well able to take care of itself, that it occupies as strong a position in the affections of our countrymen as it has done at any time in our history, and that it is able, whenever it thinks it wise and expedient, to hold up its hands against a hostile House of Commons. (Hear, hear.) With regard to the House of Commons I am again in a difficulty. It is a sorry bird, they say, that fouls its own nest. Therefore, I would be doing very wrong if I spoke any words which might seem to be speaking evil of the House of Commons. At the same, it is very difficult for a member of the Conservative party to gush over the present House of Commons. (Laughter.) I think I shall avoid that difficulty by speaking in negative terms. The last House of Commons that we were acquainted with was, we have every reason to believe, a model House of Commons. (Laughter.) The present House of Commons is widely different. We should have been glad if the last House of Commons could have been renovated and restored in the same form as it existed before. We none of us wish that the life of the present House of Commons should be very long prolonged—(laughter)—and we all hope that whenever we have another House of Commons it may be as different from the present as cheese is from chalk. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) I shall venture rather to endeavour to turn your attention to one or two questions which are likely to occupy the attention of Parliament during the coming session. There are two questions which are attracting a great amount of attention at the present moment. One of these questions is forced into prominence by the people of this country, and the other by the Government of the day. The first question is the condition and prospects of British commerce and industry, and the manner in which that condition is affected by our present commercial system, and the other is the procedure of the House of Commons. (Applause.) I will, with your permission, offer a few remarks on the first of these questions. The Liberal party denominate our present system—our present commercial system—Free Trade. Well, that is an altogether false denomination. (Applause.) We raise in this country over £19,000,000 a year from Customs duties. It is needless to say one would have thought that Free Trade does not admit of Customs duties being levied on foreign imports at all. Neither does it admit of Customs duties being levied by foreigners on the goods we sell to them. Therefore, so far as our fiscal arrangements are concerned, and so far as foreign fiscal arrangements are concerned, Free Trade does not exist. (Applause.) It is in the region of Dreamland, where I think it is likely to remain. (Applause.) We adopted a quarter of a

century ago a system of levying a large revenue—a large Customs revenue—on about half-a-dozen articles only of foreign imports, and we adopted that system as a step to Free Trade, and as an inducement to free trade, and we allowed all other articles of foreign import to come in free. Well, so far from that system of ours having attracted Free Trade, it has repelled it. (Applause.) We have not made a single convert among the nations of Europe or, I may say, the nations of the world, and the people of this country are beginning to ask themselves whether this plan of ours has promoted or has deteriorated the character, prospects, and condition of British industry and labour. (Hear, hear.) Since 1875 we know that trade has been depressed, and, though foreign countries have, under our eyes, recovered more or less from that depression, there is a general concensus of opinion that England has as yet exhibited no real trustworthy signs of recovery, and some of us—I believe it will be found to be a very large party when a general election comes—are of opinion that a more healthy commercial existence could be arrived at, and that our recovery from our present depression would be greatly stimulated by extending the range of our Customs duties by reducing the heavy duties which now oppress a few articles of such general consumption that they may be almost called necessaries, and by imposing duties on other articles which, though largely consumed, cannot be regarded in any sense of the word as necessaries. (Applause.) Our objects are two-fold. We desire to protect British labour and to open to British labour foreign markets. (Cheers.) Well, Her Majesty's Government and the Radical party are screaming with indignation over this indecent avowal, but I want to ask you, what on earth are the present Government doing at this moment! Are they not negotiating, or trying to negotiate a treaty in Paris with the French, for no other object than to protect British labour, and to open to British labour the French market? and the only difference between us and them is this—that we believe we can attain that object and that they cannot. They cannot attain it, because, for some mysterious reason or other they have chosen to tie themselves down, with cords which are not to be broken, to our present system of levying Customs duties on six articles of foreign imports, and they declare beforehand to their commercial foes that no power on earth shall induce them to alter one jot or one tittle of that system, and they would rather see England ruined than suffer a finger to be raised against the fanciful and peculiar commercial edifice which was constructed by the immortal Cobden and by the divine Bright. (Laughter.) Well, this cannot be denied, that an extended and even a heavy tariff does not necessarily ruin countries. It is very exasperating, but it is unfortunately only too true, that countries which have an extended and a heavy tariff have actually made greater progress

than we have with our narrow and restricted tariff. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Gladstone is very fond of dwelling on the immense increase in the wealth of the country, which he ascribes entirely to Free Trade, and Mr. Gladstone deals in very large figures. I like large figures too, and I think I can beat Mr. Gladstone. (Laughter.) I find by turning to a most orthodox work—a book called "The Balance Sheet of the World"—that the value of American industries increased from the year 1870 to the year 1880 to the extent of £525,000,000 sterling, whereas English industries in the same period only increased £337,000,000 sterling in value, or about £200,000,000 less. I find that the value of American manufactures increased in these ten years £206,000,000 sterling in value, whereas English manufactures only increased £116,000,000 in value or a little over £90,000,000 less. (Applause.) Port entries in Great Britain increased during the ten years 8,000,000 tons. Curiously enough, they increased in America in exactly the same proportion, in spite of the heavy American tariff. The population of Great Britain increased in ten years 3,300,000 ; the population of America increased 11,500,000. In these ten years Great Britain made 2,000 miles of railway ; America made 41,000. The profits on railways in Great Britain averaged 4·15 per cent. ; the profits on railways in America averaged 4·62 per cent. Great Britain made in the ten years from 1870, 1,000 miles of telegraphs ; America made 50,000. The accumulated wealth of Great Britain increased in these ten years, from 1870 to 1880, £650,000,000 sterling—a splendid increase. The accumulated wealth of America increased in these ten years £1,560000,000, or about three times as much. (Applause.) The annual income of Great Britain increased in these ten years £195,000,000 sterling. The annual income of America increased in the same time £344,000,000 sterling. The Americans consumed per head annually 39 bushels of grain ; our people only consumed 20. The Americans consumed per head annually 120 lbs. of meat ; our people only consumed 119 lbs. (Laughter.) Well, these are dreadful figures. The Americans ought to have been ruined according to the immortal Cobden and the divine Bright, but instead of that they have beaten us into fits, and the only difference between our commercial system is this—that they raise two-thirds of their revenue from Customs duties and we only raise one-fourth, and that is impure Free Trade and pure Protection. (Laughter.) These are figures which, I think, you will never get put before you by the Liberal party. (Applause.) There is another feature in our Customs duties which, we think, is well worthy of attention at the hands of the Constitutional Club. It is a very ugly feature. We levy our Customs duties in a manner oppressive to the working classes and favourable to the rich. Now, the value of imported tobacco in this country was £2,900,000 annually.

Well, tobacco must be looked upon as necessary to the working-classes, and on that £2,900,000, we imposed duties bringing in a revenue of £8,600,000, or about 300 per cent. On some kinds of tobacco, and on those kinds particularly used by the poorer classes, we impose a duty reaching up to 1,400 per cent., while on tea, another necessary and an article of food, on an imported value of £11,000,000, we raise a revenue by Customs of £3,800,000. On wine, which certainly cannot be looked upon as a necessary even by the most ardent foe of the teetotallers, on an imported value of £6,000,000 we only raise a revenue of £1,300,000. On silks, on an imported value of £13,000,000, we do not raise a single penny, and silk certainly cannot be looked upon as anything but the purest luxury. What I wish to point out is this—that that is the Radical idea of Free Trade, which they declare has acted so beneficially to the working-classes of this country, that you are to tax the poor man's luxury—or, as I call it, necessary—tobacco, 1,400 per cent., whereas the rich man's luxury, wine, you only tax 25 per cent. Another luxury, silk, you refuse to tax at all. Further, by refusing to tax those articles of foreign import, which are in their nature luxuries, you encourage the rich, and naturally encourage them, to spend their money on foreign labour—(hear, hear)—so that the Radicals—those friends of the people—smite the poor man on one cheek by taxing heavily his necessaries of life, and then immediately smite him on the other by driving English capital into foreign labour. Now, these Radical oracles tell us that we are not to be alarmed at decreasing exports. On the contrary, that decreasing exports and increasing imports are a sign of great prosperity. (Laughter.) Well, I want to ask you—and I could not go to a better quarter for advice—as citizens of a great commercial town, this question—and no statements on a matter of this kind are worth very much unless they are capable of being pushed to their logical conclusion—if an excess of imports over exports is of itself always necessarily a sign of great prosperity, a greater excess of imports over exports must be a sign of greater prosperity. (Applause.) Well, if that is so, if a greater excess of imports is a sign of greater prosperity—and we are all anxious to be as prosperous as we can—why export at all? (Laughter and applause.) Why not shut up all our factories, dismiss all our labourers, and content ourselves with buying? Of course, Radicals would say at once, that is nonsense. Well, so it is. I admit it, but the moment they say that, you then nail them to this, that they admit that there is a limit of safety in excess of imports over exports, and that one side of that limit is prosperity and the other side of that limit is ruin, and the only difference between us and them is this, that we believe that limit to have been reached and passed, and they do not. (Applause.) We know that from 1872 to 1875 we were extremely wealthy and prosperous in this country, and we also know

that in those three years we only bought on an average from the foreigner £100,000,000 annually more than we sold him. We also know that from 1877 to 1880 we were neither wealthy nor prosperous, and in those three years we bought from the foreigner £200,000,000 more than we sold him on an average. If the Radical theory is worth a rap, that the excess of imports over exports is itself a sign of prosperity, we clearly must have been much more prosperous in the three years from 1877 to 1880 than in the three years from 1872 to 1875, but we know, as a matter of fact, that that was not so. We know, as a matter of fact, that the three years from 1877 to 1880 were three years of the greatest possible trade depression, and that the country during those three years passed through a crisis of great commercial adversity. (Applause.) In those figures which I ventured to put to you just now, and which I hope did not weary you, there is a great difference between the English and American figures, in this—that the American figures show a steady increase on the whole, extending over the whole of the decade. The English figures show an increase up to the middle of the decade, and then a steady decline. For instance, our exports since 1872 have fallen off £22,000,000. Our exports of bullion—and this is always the great card of the Radicals—they say we have gained a large quantity of bullion—our exports of bullion have began to exceed our imports. In the last four years we have lost nearly £3,000,000 of bullion on the exchange. If you look at the assessment of the national income, the Income Tax, you will find that the amount is less in 1878 than it was in 1876 by £1,000,000, representing of course, a very large capital sum, and in 1880 the amount is less than it was in 1879 by £250,000. Well, now, never till the year 1877 has the assessment of the national income to the Income Tax shown anything but a steady increase. (Applause.) In that year it fell off £9,000,000. It recovered eight of these millions in the following year, but again fell off in 1879. In 1875 the income from mines was assessed at £14,000,000. In 1879 it had diminished to £10,000,000. In 1875 the income from iron works was assessed at £7,000,000. In 1879 it had fallen off to £1,300,000, showing on these two important branches of industry alone—mining and iron—a decrease of £9,000,000, and, of course, as you will perceive, representing a proportionately large decrease in the capital represented by disuse of machinery, stock, and plant. (Applause.) Now, again, in Schedule D, you will find that the profits from trade have fallen off since 1875 to the extent of £10,000,000. (Hear, hear.) Taking all these facts into consideration, and remembering this notorious fact, that we are not holding foreign securities to anything like the same extent we were ten years ago, and also remembering the very large emigration of adult labour, which has marked the last ten years. I do maintain, with all deference to

demand on the part of the Government for clôture by a bare majority, for that is what they want, must be met with the response that if they insist upon this despotic power we must have in return, as a guarantee against abuse, triennial Parliaments. (Applause.) Well, as I do not think the country is prepared either for triennial Parliaments or clôture, I have no doubt that there will be many independent members of the House of Commons who will proceed to all lengths in opposition to the Government in their demands for any further alteration of the ancient procedure of our Parliament. (Hear, hear.) It is perfectly easy, I affirm, for a Government, which is strong and bold, and which knows its own mind, and which has a distinct, intelligible policy, to carry that policy into effect under existing regulations, but we should be mad and worse than mad, if, in order to make things easy for a Government which has none of these qualities, we abandon all those guarantees for liberty and economy which have since time immemorial been the boast and the pride of our country. In conclusion, I must own that I really have not words in which I can adequately express to you my sense of the honour which you have done me in inviting me to visit this great commercial city, and in entertaining me as a guest at this splendid banquet. I take it that it is a recognition of the value which you set upon the efforts of Tory members of either House of Parliament, no matter how unsuccessful these efforts may appear to be at the moment, as long as they are honest and sincere, which have for their object to check and to resist the advancing tide of Radicalism set in motion by an imperious and despotic Minister. At any rate, I can claim for myself, and for some few friends of mine in the House of Commons, that when the headquarter-staff of our party was naturally stunned by the crushing and smashing nature of our defeat in 1880, when our divided and broken ranks seemed to proclaim eternal impotence we endeavoured to harass the advance of the enemy, and to occupy his attention while the main forces of our army re-formed and reconsolidated themselves, and decided upon the main lines of their policy. In the struggle, out-numbered, and out-matched, we were, I must confess, slaughtered, so to speak, over and over again, but, to the indignation of the Radicals, on the morrow of each disaster we appeared more smiling and more confident still. (Laughter and loud applause.) It should not be forgotten that the contest with Mr. Bradlaugh, which was one great Parliamentary victory which the Conservatives can boast of up to now, was initiated by Sir Henry Drummond Woolf, and that, thanks to the undaunted attitude of the Hon. Member for Portsmouth, our ancient House of Commons has not yet become a platform for the disloyal, a lecture-room for the immoral, or a temple for the Atheist and his hideous creed. (Applause.) The Tory party is now reanimated and reinforced by great victories in the country. The defeats of 1880 are forgotten, and the triumphs

of the future are prepared for and expected, for our cause is one which cannot be lost for long, and which can never die. (Applause.) This lesson, however, I and my friends may learn from the kindness to which you have treated me this evening and yesterday, that there are many among the constituencies of this country who do not look upon youth or official inexperience as a crime, who do not regard Parliamentary independence as an unpardonable sin, but who believe that unfaltering faith in political principles, and unflinching resolution in maintaining them, are qualities which have their value, and may cover many errors, and which tend to make a party powerful and a Senate strong. (Cheers.)

Mr. A. K. DIBB, barrister-at-law, and hon. secretary, submitted "The Mayor and Corporation of Hull,"

To which Alderman K. KING, M.D., ex-Mayor, responded.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL then proposed the toast of the "Hull Constitutional Club."

The President having responded,

Mr. F. B. GROTRIAN next proposed "The Conservative Cause." Large and comprehensive, he said, as the toast might be, he thought he could not do better, having regard to the advanced period of the evening, than propose it in the shortest possible terms. It required no advocacy on his part—(hear, hear) —because they were really toasting their noble selves—(laughter and applause)—the embodiment and personification of the Conservative cause. (Applause.) The Conservative cause in Hull, which was showing such a successful revival throughout the town, had every reason to be proud and thankful to Lord Churchill for his kindness in visiting the town. (Applause.) His lordship was kind enough to thank Dr. Rollit for introducing him, but he was sure the company would agree with him that the debt of obligation was on their side. (Applause.) No one could have listened to the magnificent oration just delivered by his lordship without feeling that the Conservative cause, not only in Hull, but throughout the country, had had one very grand lift towards that position which would shortly be theirs. (Applause.) The speech of his lordship on the previous night was also a powerful and remarkable one, and the "case" which he characterised as "his case for the prosecution" was indeed a terrible one for the Premier and his satellites. (Applause.) There could not be any doubt whatever that the country was not safe in the hands of the present Government. (Applause.) The great sting with regard to his lordship's "indictment" laid in its truth. (Hear, hear, and applause.) The "case" was truthfully put and supported by facts which were in evidence, and which most of them were acquainted with, and he was quite sure it would bear fruit (Applause.) He would only refer to one point in his lordship's remarks that evening, and that was with reference to Mr. Bradlaugh.

The noble lord said there was only one triumph scored by the Opposition in the many conflicts with Her Majesty's Government. He was delighted, and the Conservatives ought to be proud of the fact that that one triumph was against Mr. Bradlaugh, and against the atheistic tendencies which he attempted to propagate. (Applause.) What was their position with regard to that triumph ? Many of them might entertain a difference of opinion as to the bringing into Parliament what one might term an Enabling Act, to enable Mr. Bradlaugh to take his seat. But that was not the question before the House, but it was as to whether Mr. Bradlaugh was to take the oath, or, as he (Mr. Grotrian) put it, profane the oath. (Applause.) The Conservatives did right, and it redounded much to their credit that they were successful upon that point. (Applause.) He referred to the work in which Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant were engaged, which, he said, was degrading to our manhood, and demoralising to all the best feelings and noblest aspirations of our humanity. In woman rested all our hopes in the discharge of the duties which had to do with the early training of our children, and the purity and happiness of our homes, and which we were asked to surrender and take in exchange the fruits of a disgusting philosophy. No ! Our aspirations, with regard to our wives and daughters, was rather embodied in these lines :—

> "The reason firm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,
> A perfect woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, and command,
> And yet a spirit still and bright,
> With somthing of an angel light."

(Applause.) He said he hoped the time was far distant when Mr. Bradlaugh would occupy a seat in Parliament. (Applause.) Mr. Grotrian next briefly criticised the policy of the Government in dealing with Ireland, showing how that country, under the rule of our peace-loving and coercion-hating Government, was a perfect garrison filled with bayonets. And, in conclusion, said that Mr. Gladstone might take a lesson from an old Greek writer, who stated that power exercised with violence was seldom of long duration, but tempered with moderation it generally produced permanency in all things. (Loud applause.)

Sir CHARLES LEGARD responded to the toast.

Mr. R. M. CRAVEN, J.P., ex-Sheriff of Hull, then gave "The Hull Conservative Association."

Mr. LUMLEY COOK, hon. secretary to the association, replied on its behalf.

Lieutenant-Colonel SANER, J.P., proposed "The Town and Trade of Hull," to which Mr. E. P. Maxsted, J.P., responded.

Other toasts followed, and the list was concluded about midnight.

SPEECHES

OF THE

MOST NOBLE
THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.

DELIVERED AT EDINBURGH ON THE
23D, 24TH, AND 25TH NOV. 1882

PUBLISHED BY
THE NATIONAL UNION OF CONSERVATIVE AND CONSTITUTIONAL ASSOCIATIONS,
ST STEPHEN'S CHAMBERS, BRIDGE ST., WESTMINSTER, S.W.

1882.

SPEECH

AT

THE BANQUET GIVEN BY THE SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE CLUB

IN THE CORN EXCHANGE, EDINBURGH,
23D NOVEMBER 1882.

MY LORD DALKEITH, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

I thank you most sincerely for the very kind manner in which my health has been proposed by Lord Dalkeith and received by you. And I feel how much encouragement it is to all who are engaged in the arduous duties which now fall on those who fight in the Conservative ranks, to realise that they are sustained and animated by the support of powerful and influential meetings, such as this. It has been thought, perhaps, something of an intrusion that we should come to this metropolis of Liberalism at all. But we have benevolent views with regard to this metropolis of Liberalism, and we hope soon to clothe it with a fairer name. And it is thought still more an intrusion that we make this unwelcome exhibition of our zeal at a time when the Government imagined that their opponents were a scattered and defeated party, crushed to the earth by wonder at their marvellous achievements in diplomacy and war. Well, perhaps an event that happened in Wiltshire two days ago, may have pointed out to them that the English people do not necessarily hold precisely the same exalted estimate of what has taken place that they do. I think they will find that, however keen we may all be, in unison with the views which we have heard from my gallant friend to-night, to tender the homage of our unrestrained admiration for the valour which has fought in Egypt, and the skill by which that valour has been guided, we cannot undertake to transfer bodily

to her Majesty's Government the whole of the merits acquired by our army. I think before that imputation takes place, this country will require to examine—and examine by the light of those feelings which are produced by the process of paying the bill—the policy by which the war in Egypt was rendered necessary, and later on, to examine the results to which this expenditure of blood and treasure has led.

In speaking of the policy which has led to this war in Egypt, I do not think it necessary to notice the attempts which have been made by some minor organs of the Government to infer that what has happined at the end of 1882 was the necessary result of what was done in 1879. The system of Government, or the systen of financial administration, I should rather say, which we counseled the Khedive to set up, was one of which her Majesty's Government, when they acceded to office, expressed their approval of, and which they could have altered or abandoned if they disapproved of it. The system of dual control, say some of the advocates of her Majesty's Government, was one which it was impossible for the Government to manage, and would necessarily overthrow them. You will have often noticed that if a horse and his rider unfortunately part company, it is always afterwards found to be the fault of the horse. But any such imputations are not, to do them justice, authorised by the heads of the Government themselves, and it was perfectly open to the Government to have abandoned the system if they found it fraught with either inconvenience or danger. But it is notorious that they approved of it from the first. I am not myself so far enamoured of it that I should now propose its restoration. But it was an expedient perfectly suited to the circumstances under which it was set up, and it might have been maintained for a very considerable time if there had been applied to it those qualities which are necessary in sustaining any oriental system of administration—namely, that the authority which was vindicated should be vindicated by force so soon as it was vindicated by words, and that no time should elapse between the utterance of a defiance and its justification. That is the condition of the maintenance of authority in every oriental country. If in India you were to deal with a rising against your authority, by telling them in January that you treated them as foes, and waited and took no action till May or June, you would speedily compromise your power of taking any action at all. But this lack of promptitude and vigilance—though, no doubt, it was the lack of those qualities which made the maintenance of the prevous arrangements impossible—are not, to my mind, the only contribution which her Majesty's Government have made to the catastrophe which we saw last summer.

You may remember, when the late Government had to deal

with difficulties in Egypt, our immediate course was to appeal to the suzerain Power, and we were able—by earnest appeals, no doubt—to influence the suzerain Power so far, that necessary measures were taken for modifying the conditions of government; and the result of this policy was, that the deposition of the Khedive—being done by the authority of the Caliph—commanded the assent of the Mussulman world. When her Majesty's Government came to office, they came weighted with the unlucky pledges which were delivered in this county. They came, bound to show hostility to the Government of Turkey, and upon the first diplomatic occasion that arose they were forced to fulfil that pledge. The difficulties of Montenegro, the difficulties of Greece, were not matters that interested this country very largely. They could have been settled—it was easy to settle them at any moment, if you chose to do so,—by disregarding the wishes of the Sovereign of Turkey. But we never could venture on that course, because we knew there were other problems and difficulties behind, which, if you made the Soverign of Turkey your enemy, must lead you into formidable embarrassments. The key of this question of Egypt lay in those previous diplomatic communications with respect to Montenegro and to Greeee. At the time it was thought a great triumph that they were settled so easily, and so much to the satisfaction of the certain nations with whom many persons in this country deeply sympathise—that men did not sufficiently see that they were setting against them the only Power that could help them to a pacific solution of any difficulties that might arise in Egypt.

Well, then, look at another peculiarity of this Egyptian campaign. The first thing that strikes you when you look at it as a whole, is wonder that Arabi Pasha with his force, with his opportunities, should have defied as he did the power of such a country as Great Britain. How is that mystery to be solved? If any nation suffers itself to get into war with a weaker nation which is sufficiently civilised to know the great difference that exists between them, you may depend upon it there is something in the conduct of the stronger nation which induces people, induces the weaker nation, to believe it will never exert its strength. We have heard a great deal about *prestige*. I detest the word. It does not really express what we mean. I should rather use the phrase military credit. But military credit stands in precisely the same position as financial credit. The use of it is to represent military power, and to effect the objects of a military power without the necessity of a recourse to arms. You know that a man possessing great financial credit can perform great operations by the mere knowledge of the wealth of which he is master, and that it is not necessary to sell him up to ascertain if he is solvent and can

pay twenty shillings in the pound, in order to have the benet of all the wealth he can command. It is the same with a milary nation that is careful to preserve its military credit. If it loes so it may, without shedding one drop of blood or incurringone penny of expenditure, effect all the objects which, withoutthat military credit, can only result in much waste of blood and reasure. Now we were in the position of a financial operatorwho had ruined his own credit by doubtful and dangerous operatons. We had squandered our military credit at Majuba Hill—whad taken up the position of a Power that was willing to subm to any insult that might be placed upon it. We had proclaimd to the world that we were not ready to fight for our military renwn, and the tradition of our ancestors was lost in us. It was a alse proclamation—a proclamation that the Ministry had no authrity from the nation to make — and which the nation at the irst opportunity forced them to disavow. But the disavowal hascost blood and treasure which, if they had been more careful o the reputation of this country, need never have been expended. You know, gentlemen, that in times past, three years ago, those who maintained such doctrines and insisted on the necessity o the maintenance of your military credit as one of the most preious inheritances of the nation were denounced as Jingoes. But ese Jingoes are justified now. They have her Majesty's Goverment for converts. They have forced her Majesty's Governmer to demonstrate in action that which is their principal conterion, that if you suffer military credit to be obscured the fault mu be wiped out in blood. My Lords, I feel how inadequate I a to deal with a question of this kind in a place such as this. I how it has been occupied by a much greater artist, and I feel hat there has been a loss to the world of splendid specimens of plitical denunciation, because the misdeeds of the Ministry of 882 were, unfortunately, not subject to the criticism of the orato of 1880. What magnificent lessons, what splendid periods ofeloquence we have lost. Just think that if Mr Gladstone—whe the spirit of 1880 was upon him, if he could have had to deal vith the case of a Ministry professing the deepest respect for theoncert of Europe, the deepest anxiety to obey its will, a Mirstry which, with those professions upon its lips, assembled a Cofernce, and kept it for months in vain debate, and under covr of its discussions prepared its armaments, asked for leave to irade a country which the Conference refused to give, and then, hen the refusal was given and the armaments were ready, the Cofernce was calmly shown to the door, and the country which hey had asked the leave of Europe to take, they took in despi of Europe's will! If the orator of 1880 had had such a them to dwell upon, what would he have said of disingenuousnessand

subtlety—of the fair name of England soiled, and the necessity above all things, as a safeguard against selfish politics, of scrupulous obedience to the united will of Europe? Or take another case. Supposing that unequalled orator had had before him the case of a Government who sent a large fleet—a vast fleet—into a port where they had no international right to go, and when that fleet was there, had demanded that certain arrangements should be made on land, which they had no international right to demand, and when these demands were not satisfied, had forthwith enforced that by the bombardment of a great commercial port, would you not have heard about political brigandage? What sermons you would have had to listen to with respect to the equality of all nations—the weakest and the strongest—before the law of Europe! What denunciations would you not have heard of those who could, for the sake of British interests, expose such a city to such a catastrophe, and carry fire and sword among a defenceless people! That great artist drew a picture of Sir Frederick Roberts. I cannot help wishing that he had to draw a picture of Sir Beauchamp Seymour. But allow me to say in passing, that if my poor pencil could be employed, it would be drawn in nothing but the most flattering colours. I think, if we can imagine anything so impossible as the orator of 1880 having to describe and comment on the events of 1882, that he would have noticed one of the most remarkable coincidences which the history of this country furnishes. It is a very curious fact that we have only had one member of the Society of Friends—commonly called, and I believe in the statute-book called "Quakers," so that I may use the word without offence—in the Cabinet. We have only had one Quaker in the Cabinet; and only once in the history of the world—so far, at least, as this hemisphere is concerned, if I am not mistaken—has a great commercial city of the first class been subject to naval bombardment—and it is a very remarkable fact that when the order was given to bombard that commercial city, that Quaker was in that Cabinet. At all events, grave as these events have been, I think they will furnish some good fruit at least for the future. I hope we have taken a new departure in Liberal politics. I trust that for the future any Minister who cares about British interests, and thinks it right to go to war in their defence, will not be subject to denunciation on the part of the Liberal party for doing so. I am quite aware that British interests were treated with scant respect in 1880; I am quite aware that Mr Gladstone denounced as monstrous the idea that we could claim to control a country, simply because it lay on our route to India—but if ever there was a war—I don't know what to call it; I believe it was not "a war"—but if ever there were sanguinary operations undertaken for the sake of British interests,

undoubtedly these recent operations in Egypt have deserved that character.

Well then, again, I trust that something has been added to our knowledge of the doctrine of national self-defence. You may remember that in the case of the Afghanistan and Zulu war we were denounced as unworthy of the slightest moral consideration; in fact, very much stronger words were used, because we maintained that it may be necessary, purely for the purposes of self-defence, that the Power which is defending itself should strike the first blow and become technically the aggressor. If a preparation is being made in a foreign country that is by the side of your own, and a preparation which threatens the security of your possessons, you are, we maintain, by the law of national self-defence, justified in using forcible means to bring those preparations to an end. That was the justification of the Zulu war, that was the justfication of the war which we undertook in Afghanistan, because the Russian representative was admitted to the Court of Cabul while our own was driven back.

But what was the justification of these operations which ended in the utter destruction of Alexandria? Why, that preparaions were being made on the land—on land not belonging to us but which, if prosecuted, might have compromised the safety of our fleet, which chose to lie in the harbour, but which might have gone out if it pleased. After that precedent it will be quite imposible for any Liberal Government to limit, as they have done in the past, the rights of national self-defence. With respect to the end of the war we have yet to wait. We do not know what the prsent negotiations may bring forth. We must suspend our judgments until we see what the result will be. I confess that I shoul be inclined to look on all these circumstances to which I have adverted with a very indulgent eye if the result of the negotiaions which are impending should be to extend the strength, the power, and the predominance of the influence of the empire of Great Britain—for I am old-fashioned enough to believe in that enpire, and believe in its greatness. I believe that wherever it has been extended it has conferred unnumbered benefits upon those who have been brought within its sway, and that the extension of the empire, so far from being the desire of selfishness or acquisitiveness, as it has been represented to be, or deserving to be compared to acts of plunder in private life, is in reality a desire not only to extend the commerce and to strengthen the power of our Goernment here at home, but to give to others those blessings of fredom and order which we have always prized and maintained amngst ourselves. Let us, therefore, in all the negotiations which are before us not be ashamed of our empire.

We are now the predominant Power in Egypt; the valor of

our troops has made us so. Let us observe with rigid fidelity every engagement we have taken to the amiable and respectable prince who rules in Egypt; but as regards the other Powers of Europe, let us follow our position to its logical result. We are the predominant Power, why should we cease to be so? Why should we allow diplomacy to fritter away what the valour of our soldiers has won? If the Government acts in that spirit there will be little inclination to scrutinise the steps of the policy by which the result is reached; but if they allow themselves to be made the mere tools of others—if they act the part of mere thief-takers to the Khedive of Egypt, and are satisfied with bringing this unlucky Arabi Pasha to trial—if no greater or more solid benefit than that accrues from the loss of so many valuable lives and the spending of so much treasure, severe indeed will be the judgment of the people of this country on the Government to whom that result is due.

This matter of Egypt is in suspense, and so also is the other great difficulty with which the Government have had to contend. They are proud of what they speak of as the improved condition of Ireland. I wonder whether it does not occur to them that, both with respect to Egypt and Ireland, if there is an improved condition, it is due to the fact that they have repudiated and cast out the doctrine that "force is no remedy," and that they have listened to the advice which their political opponents have not ceased to tender them. We have maintained that no good could be done in Ireland, no matter what grievances you have to redress, unless the primary duty of the Government was first discharged—of maintaining order and performing justice. Now, they will tell you that the comparative quietude of Ireland is due to their remedial measures. Their remedial measures were introduced with the spring of last year. Ever since their introduction the outrages in Ireland went on in an increasing ratio, until they culminated in the lamented deaths of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Burke. Then came the other policy; then came a real genuine attempt to re-establish order and to enforce the administration of justice: and no sooner was that passed by Parliament, and executed with even moderate firmness by the Administration of the day, than at once outrages diminished, and the peace of Ireland began to amend. In the face of this chronology, it is ridiculous to tell me that it is what they call the remedial measures of the Government that has produced the improvement of which they speak. I do not at all deny that it was very desirable to introduce remedial measures; but I should not have counselled the trying of remedial measures which have only had the effect of destroying all confidence in the country, and of driving capital from the land. I should not have counselled measures which destroy the confidence

of every landholder in the security of his own property, and introduced causes of dispute between landlord and tenant. If you were to do anything, it should have been in the direction of an effort—no matter of how small a kind, because in such a mater you could not move fast—an effort to have bound to the fortunes of the empire a larger portion of the population by the link of ownership. I should have counselled such an effort. But, unfortunately, the hope of that has been dissipated by two causes. The fund from which it could have been done—the Irish Church Fund—has been sacrificed to an absurd Arrears Bill; and the tenants have been prevented from any effort to become owners by purchase by being offered a far more eligible fate. Nobody who can get his land by bullying will care to take it by buying. They have been taught by the experience of facts that agitation will bring them what they want, and it will be a long time before they will learn the lesson to take a more humble and more honest part. Well, gentlemen, we have before us these two difficulties of Egypt and Ireland, which have not reflected much credit on the Government, who adopted a means of action borrowed very much from the advice of their political opponents, and that necessity will necessarily affect their policy in other matters.

We have heard it said by distinguished authorities that there are Liberals and Liberals. I should prefer to say that the Liberals are not a party—they are an alliance or a confederation—and it is necessary that each member of the alliance should get something in order to bind him to the common standard. Now, hitherto it has been one of the great merits of the present Prime Minster that he has been able, by vague and mysterious language, to insinuate promises which may go as far as your imagination pleases to wander, and which yet, if grammatically tested, bind him to scarcely anything at all. Now we have before us the instance of the unfortunate Quaker. I suppose, if the election of 1880 conveyed any lesson at all, it was to assure the members of the Society of Friends that they were safe for the future from all wars waged for the purpose of securing British interests, or keeping open the route to India—and we see, by the secession of their eminent representative, how deep their disappointment has been. I have no doubt, if you examine the language of Mr Gladstone, you will find nothing in it which absolutely binds him to the construction of the Quakers. But that is the marvellous skill and cleverness of the man. He can

> "Keep the word of promise to the ear,
> And break it to the hope."

You remember what class of being it was said was capable of that performanance. There are others who have been fed upon

the same food, but have not yet been subjected to the same disenchantment. We don't know what is reserved for them—whether the word of promise is to be kept to the ear or to the hope. For instance, there are those who desire the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Read over the speeches of Mr Gladstone, and they will certainly convey to you the idea, that although he undertook — which was not necessary he should undertake—not to disestablish the Church without a Parliamentary majority for the purpose of enabling him to do so, though he undertook expressly not to smuggle the Church of Scotland out of existence, still that his general intention was to accomplish that desirable reform whenever he had an opportunity. I have not a notion which of the two interpretations he intends in practice to give to his words, and I have a shrewd suspicion that he does not know any more than I do. He is perfectly ready to sail north or to sail south, but he cannot tell you which he will do until you tell him which way the wind will blow. Well, then, there is the case of the farmer. He used language which may mean the rankest Communism, or may mean merely such mitigations of the law as few Conservatives would refuse to consider. It is impossible to know on which alternative he will ultimately decide, but I am told that within the last few weeks the Government have shown a strong inclination to get up a small Ireland in the west of Scotland. I am not the least surprised that they should do so. Ireland has been very useful to them, and if they can only multiply a country in which they might first say force was no remedy ; and then afterwards, when it was quite evident that nothing would succeed but force, pass coercion measures ; such countries would tend to the longevity of an Administration, and would be multiplied by every Minister who regarded the prospects of his own colleagues. I have no doubt that by refusing to the arm of the law and the decree of the Court of Session the necessary force, efforts will be made to get up that sort of question in the west of Scotland, which may bring landlords generally into contempt, and may give the Government an opportunity of making those alternate displays of leniency and vigour which have conferred so many benefits on the empire.

Well, then, the last specimen of this vague and mysterious language is a much more serious matter. It is with respect to the future legislation for Ireland. Whenever there is to be a Parliamentary hitch, whenever the calculations of the whips have become nervously uncertain, Mr Gladstone is always throwing out hints of his devotion to the cause of local government in Ireland, which his advocates in this country have interpreted to mean nothing but county boards, but which the Irish members themselves have always taken as an encouragement to agitate for

the disintegration of the empire. And when the moment of decision comes, when it has to be determined whether it is county boards or the disintegration of the empire which has been promised, I will engage to you that Mr Gladstone's words are so carefully poised and so judiciously vague, that no one shall be able to say that he has been misled. But that is a cruel way to deal with the interests of a great empire. On the firm belief in the Irish that the inhabitants of these islands mean to maintain the ink between the two countries unbroken and unimpaired, depend all hope of the restoration of order or the return to prosperity of that unhappy land. On it depends all the chance of retaining that loyal, that stout-hearted population, furnished in a great measure from our country of old to Ireland, and on which the maintenance of any hope of English supremacy over Ireland utterly depends. There is no worse service that Mr Gladstone has performed to the future of the empire over which he rules than the persistency with which he has used language to persuade them that nothing is fixed, nothing is determined; that if they agitate enough anything may be gained; that no question is ever fixed; that finality is perpetually adjourned; and that if they will only press hard enough, the deepest interests of the empire the laws which concern its very existence, are matters for legitimate discussion.

I confess I do not often envy the United States: but there is one feature in their institutions which appears to me the subject of greatest envy—their magnificent institution of the Supreme Court. There, if Congress passes any measure inconsistent with the constitution of the country, there exists a Court which will negative it at once, and gives a stability to the institutions of that country which, under the system of vague and mysterious promises, here we look for in vain. Now, gentlemen, I have detained you a long time, but I am only trying to impress upon you that you must not suppose that because in this matter of foreign policy the doctrines which we have urged have been to a great extent accepted, that therefore there is no danger to be guarded against in internal matters of legislation. We do not know what the future may bring forth. We have no guide to enable us to interpret Ministerial promises. All that we know is, that hitherto they have been restrained by no scruple with respect to ancient institutions, by no reverence for private right. They have freely abolished what was old. They have rendered nugatory rights which had existed from a hoar antiquity. They have cancelled contracts which were signed only yesterday. They have determined that rights which men had acquired in confidence from the promise of Parliament were of no avail, and were not to be respected. And only the other day they have made this further

innovation upon our constitutional traditions, that for the first time they have limited freedom of speech in the representative House of the council of the nation. With these warnings before you, you would be indeed unwise if you relaxed your efforts or weakened your organisation. And do not imagine, as many are forward to tell you, that those efforts have no hope, and are a vain beating against the inevitable. I cannot admit that, either with respect to the Conservative party generally or the Conservative party in Scotland. Generally we have this consolation, that we know that since Mr Gladstone introduced his Land Bill, we have won several seats, and we have not lost one. And we also know, that in important matters of policy the Government have found it necessary to borrow the principles of the Opposition. With respect to Scotland, I am told—and my noble friend beside me repeated it—that you are fighting an uphill fight There is no doubt it is the case. It is a fight which will tax all your energies, and claim all the efforts you can give to it, but it is not a fight without hope. Depend upon it, although you have to deal with a people who are singularly tenacious of an adverse prepossession when they have once conceived it, yet you have also to deal with a people probably above every other in Europe shrewd and penetrating in their judgment. You must not believe that they will continue indefinitely to hold opinions in a changed condition of things, because those opinions were formed when matters were very different. They are quite keen enough to see that political names have altered their meanings, that political parties have changed their standpoints. The Liberal party is forced by the very law of its existence —it is its constant boast—to march constantly onwards. They call it progress, but they have not made up their minds to what goal that progress tends. Already they have traversed the field of the older Liberalism. They have passed from the land where they were under the shadow of the older doctrines of political economy and of freedom of contract. Before them lies the wide expanse of Socialism, towards which they are advancing. By an inevitable law they must march onwards. Those who appeal to revolutionary instincts can do many things, but the one thing they cannot do is to halt. They must go on. They have already passed the border in many points. Their legislation in respect of Ireland, for instance, suffers strongly from the Socialist venom. It will take some time, perhaps, before the people of Scotland are persuaded that the party which was their old favourite is so degenerated. Time must elapse—perhaps generations must change; but in the long run I feel confident that the people of Scotland will not accompany them on this dangerous enterprise. Already, from all I hear, there are signs of change. There is that most pregnant sign of all, that the young are Conservative where

the old are Liberal. That is to say, that the men who are bound by their prejudices and antecedents remain Liberal, and thenen free to judge become Conservative. You may be sure thatpro-cess will continue. It may not happen rapidly, it may hapen slowly; but it will happen surely. They will turn fromthe party which is leading them to revolutionary projects inconsistent with the industrial wellbeing of society, and they will turn tothat party to whom has fallen the defence of individual liberty; of the rights of property; of the sacredness of religion; and of ose institutions by which liberty, property, and religion have hiterto been so marvellously sustained.

SPEECH

IN ANSWER TO THE ADDRESSES PRESENTED BY

CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATIONS IN THE EAST AND SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

24TH NOVEMBER 1882.

SIR GRAHAM MONTGOMERY, MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,—

I have to express my sincere acknowledgments for the addresses which have just been presented to me, and to Mr Murray for the kind manner in which he has introduced the address from this city;[1] and to you, ladies and gentlemen, for the very kind manner in which you received me when I rose. It is a matter of great satisfaction to me to receive these evidences of Conservative activity and exertion in various parts of this populous and influential country, at a time which appears to me to be singularly important in our political history, and to engage, more perhaps than any time that I can remember, the sympathies and the earnest effort of every Conservative, because we live in a time of rapid transition. It is said that the Ministry of the day are in the flood-tide of their fortune. I am a little sceptical of that confident assertion; but be it true or false, it is a transitory phenomenon, having little effect upon the deep political changes which are going on by the side of it. Parties are changing their character. Political names are altering their signification. New questions are coming to the front, and new calls are being consequently made for Conservative self-devotion and activity. It is a very common thing for Liberal speakers to try to commend their cause to-day, by references to what they are pleased to call the history of the success of their party in the past. That history is a little legendary. They are apt to claim for themselves the advantage of every good thing that has been done by anybody, and to ignore any mistakes or mishaps that may have happened to them

[1] See Appendix.

in their career. I am not going minutely to compare the performances of the two parties in the past. I am well satisfied with the record that we should have to show.

In the matter of those important acts of legislation which afect the wellbeing of the community directly, and the comfort and happiness of every individual, we have no small performances to show. If we had nothing else to quote but the relaxation of the crimnal code, and the passing of the Factory Acts—the most beneficentact of legislation of this century—these things were the work of the Tory party, and on them alone I should be content to repose our claims. With respect to the great political changes, both paries are very much on the same level. Up to the moment when a change became, for good or evil, inevitable, both parties retained their preference for the state of things as it then exised. Neither party wished to abandon the system of protection, or to accept the system of household suffrage till just on the eve of the change. It was imposed upon both of them simultaneously in each case by a power superior to their own. And in each case the political opinions of the parties were adapted to the circumstances of the time. But the character of the parties in the past seems to me, in the present state of our politics in this country, to be a wholly irrelevant consideration. What we have to deal with is not the past but the present. The identity of present parties with the parties in past times is a matter with regard to which some curious controversy might be raised. I never quite understand how the Liberal party, of which not only the men are changed, but all the principles have changed too, can be precisely identcal with the Liberal party of the past. On this matter of identitywe know that the distinguished statesman who is at the head of her Majesty's Government entertains very curious opinions. He appears entirely to forget that his opinions are not precisely identical with those which he entertained when he was a young man. I remember on one occasion, in a general denunciation of the Tory party, he quoted what was said of the Tory Goverment of 1834, saying that the Governments of Russia and Austria rejoiced atits advent to power, but every friend of liberty repined. He entirely forgot that he was a member of that Tory Government of 1834; and so, I think, when the Land Bill was introduced last year,he denounced with great vigour the wickedness of Parliament in having conferred, as he expressed it, behind the backs of the Irish tenants, the power of eviction on the landlords. They did this in the year 1860, when Mr Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he was consequently the dominant authority with respect to all that passed in the House of Commons. This identty, in the course of his constant transformations, he seems to have forgotten in his own person, and is anxious to proclaim for the

party to which he belongs. I entirely dispute the claim to that identity. The Whigs and Tories in the past have fought with each other, have criticised and condemned each other; and as their criticisms might meet the circumstances of the time, or the popular approval, one or the other succeeded in obtaining the privilege of serving the people of this country.

But there was no more than the maintenance of the particular principles of the Government to which they were attached, and the criticism of the acts of the party to which they were opposed. Solely and greatly under the influence of the present Prime Minister, a change has come over the action of English parties. The Radical party has now come to the front,—a party whose power feeds upon and depends on the existence of discontent. And as their power depends upon the existence of discontent, so they are not only quick to find it out, but eager to encourage and to promote it when it appears. If they find anywhere a crack that is tending to divide two classes in the community, they hasten to drive in the wedge, and to split it into a chasm. Their office, their function, seems to be to exasperate every animosity between class and class, to fan it into a flame, and draw from it that electoral support which is the object of their industry and their action. Of course, I have no doubt they will tell you that their mission is to hear of grievances and to obtain their redress. Yes; but a party whose mission it is to live entirely upon the discovery of grievances, and which, if these grievances do not exist, and are not found, must die of inanition, is very apt to manufacture the element upon which it subsists. So it is with the informer. It is very good that crimes, if they exist, should be informed against, and public justice should act against them, but still the common informer is a common nuisance. I remember some time ago in London there was a man brought up for the crime of arson, and he was discovered to pursue this curious industry. It was the practice of the police to give every man half-a-crown who should be the first to inform them of any fire that might exist. So the practice of this man was first to set fire to a building and then to rush off to the police and earn half-a-crown for informing them of the fire. Now that is precisely the position of the Radical party in this country. It is no doubt their function to detect and redress grievances, but if you will watch them, you will observe that their entire industry is devoted to aggravating and inflaming any animosities or grievances that may exist.

Now, gentlemen, this party is a very different thing from the old Whigs and Tories. It is a party whose action cannot in any State be continued for any length of time without seriously compromising that unity between the various classes of the State on condition of which alone a great empire can be sustained; and

let me say that this peculiar form of political activity which has been developed into the foundation of a party in our time tells more severely against the humbler classes of society than against the richer. Their favourite topics are those subjects that may tend to inflame the poorer and the well-to-do against each other. Even the great man who is at the head of the Ministry is not entirely above this weakness. I remember when the issue of the last election was announced, he very ostentatiously took credit to himself because he was opposed in London where he said wealth was produced, and in Westminster where wealth was expended. Now it is quite right for a statesman to be forward in defence of the poor; and no system of political opinion which is not just as between rich and poor can hope to survive in this country. But it does not follow that a man is doing any service to his country, or that he is in any way serving the interest of the poorer class, by setting rich and poor against each other. Consider what it is which really concerns the industrial members of society, whether they are workmen or whether they are tradesmen. Great political measures touch them little. Even if you could suppose measures of great spoliation which should divide the property of the rich, how little value could it be to each individual workman or shopkeeper in this great country. But what is of all things important to them is that capital should flow, that employment should exist, that wages should maintain a high level, and that the expenditure consequent upon a high level of wages should fertilise the channels of commerce. But capital will not flow unless there is confidence; and every system of political doctrine which tends to create animosities between the various classes of society is directed wilfully and in front against that confidence which is vital to the existence of industry. In order that capital may flow, in order that enterprise may exist, enterprise must be free, and investment must be secure. There are plenty of people who are willing enough, when they have money, instead of investing it in such remunerative undertakings as will cause the employment of labour and the general growth of the wealth of the community, who are content to spend it in idle luxury; and in precise proportion as the free flow of capital is discouraged that tendency will gain strength. Look what it is in other countries—in Asiatic countries—where Government is notoriously insecure. Why, there you find that there is the greatest possible luxury and the absolute absence of enterprise. Men who possess capital only hasten to enjoy it because they know they cannot trust their Government, and that if they were to try and increase that capital by remunerative and profitable employment, they would run a great chance of losing it. Now, of course, I am only indicating to you the dangerous tendency. We know very well that our social forces in this land

are as yet too strong to allow any such dangerous results to follow to any perceptible degree; but if you wish to see what is the real tendency of such treatment, look at the sister country, look at the state of Ireland. Whenever the Liberals ask you to listen to them on the ground of their past achievements, just consider the case of Ireland. Ireland, as it is, is a Liberal creation. I know that there is a popular belief that Oliver Cromwell and William of Orange were Tories; but it is not true. The Whigs imposed the penal laws—the Whigs imposed those restraints upon the industry of Ireland of which we have heard so much complaint. The Whigs and Liberals during the present century have had the control of almost every measure designed for the improvment or alleviation of the condition of Ireland. It was the Liberals who passed the Encumbered Estates Act, which threw out and expropriated the old families of the land and drew the commercial investor in land—that very man whose misdeeds they now profess to denounce, and whom they have calmly deprived of his property.

Well, now, in Ireland you have had a policy which in my belief was objectionable from two very different points of view, and in very different degrees. The land policy of the present Government is objectionable in the first instance because it interferes seriously with freedom of contract. Don't understand me to say that that of itself is necessarily a fatal objection. I am quite aware that Parliament claims, and must always claim, a right to interfere and dictate the circumstances of contracts if it thinks fit; but though it has done so—sometimes wisely, sometimes foolishly—the tendency of modern science and experience has been to discourage the exercise of that power to the utmost possible extent. That very law to which I have just referred—the Factory Act—was an interference with freedom of contract—a most beneficial and wise interference; but on the other hand, you have such an interference as the Usury Laws, which were abandoned by universal consent, because they had not fulfilled any of the objects for which they were set up. I think it may be said generally—but, of course, there are exceptions—that when questions of life, or limb, or health are at issue, Parliament does wisely to interfere with freedom of contract. But when it is a question of money,—when it is a question of what men should commercially gain or lose by a bargain,—Parliament had better let grown men settle with each other their own bargains, and any interference on which it ventures is likely to be injurious to both parties. Of course the chief evil that is the result of interference with freedom of contract is to discourage the industry which these contracts affect. Men will not invest their money, and they will not run risks or give their labour, if their efforts are

thwarted in this direction or in that by the ignorant interference of a power which frequently does not understand the conditions of the industry with which it meddles. And the other evil is that there will be a constant effort to evade the interference of Parliament; or, rather, there will be a constant effort to get out of the conditions to which the law applies.

Now see what Parliament has done for Ireland. It has laid down a land law which settles how and on what conditions people are to take land; settles it for the tenant and settles it for the landlord by a number of minute and, in my judgment, very vexatious regulations. But, of course, it was impossible to carry out that prohibition, that restriction, to the largest class of holdings. The theory was that the Irish peasant was a mild, gentle, exceedingly simple individual, who was perfectly unable to take care of himself, and who required the interference of those gentlemen at Westminster to settle on what terms he was to pursue his industry. Even if that was true—it obviously was not true of the grazier who held land to the value of £150 or £200 a year or more; so Parliament has had to allow those who held on that level—I think the limit is £150 a year—to contract themselves out of that Act. Now, mark the result of this proceeding, because it is an instructive instance of the danger of interfering with freedom of contract. Every landlord knows that if he can get his land into blocks forming farms worth £150 a-year, he can get himself out of the vexatious restrictions of the Land Act. Well, of course, there will be many landlords—men attached to their tenantry, attached to their estates—who will not take any advantage of the law, and will be kindly to their tenants, though it be to their own hindrance. But you must not count on sentiment of that kind. The only wise legislation is the legislation that assumes that every man will act according to his own interests; and so in a great many instances—in the instances of weaker and poorer men who are struggling for their lives, and who depend on their estates for the maintenance and education of their families—you will find that they will take advantage of every relief that the law can give them. And if a man of that kind were to go to his man of business and say, "What should I do to get out of the restrictions and privations that this Land Act imposes upon me?" the man of business would reply, "Why, you will watch your tenants carefully, and the moment a man is in arrear with his rent, you will get rid of him. You should evict him without mercy; and then, when you have brought together a sufficient number of holdings to make up farms of £150 or more, you will be free from the operation of this Land Act.

I do not hold up such conduct to you as humane or laudable,

but I point out to you the effect of this Act, judging it upon those principles of human conduct, those principles of self-interest, which the Legislature must take as its guide. The effect of it is to make it the direct and imperious interest of the landlords of Ireland to insist upon those very evictions to which we are told the whole misery of the population is due—and that is the effect of interfering with the natural freedom of contract. But there is much worse than this in the legislation on Irish land. To interfere with freedom of future contracts is well within the jurisdiction of Parliament; but to take a contract that already exists, and say that one side of it shall keep all the advantages and the other shall sacrifice its advantages—that is not within the competence of Parliament to enact. What do you imagine the effect will be? Suppose you bought a cow, and Parliament comes down and says, "You have bought that cow; you shall keep your cow, but only pay one-third or three-fourths of the price." What do you suppose the effect of that enactment would be upon the man who sold the cow? Very naturally he would never care to trouble himself with selling cows again, and keep himself well out of the way of the spoliating action of Parliament. That is what has happened with respect to the land in Ireland. Parliament invited men to come into Irish land on commercial principles. By the passing of the Encumbered Estates Act, and many subsequent Acts, it avowedly encouraged men to come and invest their savings in the purchase of land, and then when they bought that land it says—the tenant shall keep the land, but you shall only have two-thirds or three-fourths of the rent. The effect of that, for which present expediency may be pleaded in its behalf, must be fatal to the future prosperity of the country. Every man knows that this action of the Government is not the limit to which those under whose influence it is walking would wish it to go. While the Government is taking a third or a quarter, Mr Davitt is going about preaching that it ought to take the whole. Well, under these circumstances, do you think that men are likely to invest their money in the improvement of land—do you think they are likely to carry their capital to a country where such things occur?

I lately saw a letter from Mr Mitchell Henry—a Liberal gentleman, but a very philanthropic one—pointing out the enormous wealth that might be made by the application of money to the improvement of Irish bogs. Mr Bright is very fond of dwelling on the water-power of Lough Corrib, and the wonderful results that would come to Ireland if that water-power could be utilised. Well, we had the other day a letter from a clergyman in the west of Ireland, giving a piteous account of the misery of whole districts; and one of the causes that he assigned was that there

now was no remunerative employment. But these are the natral penalties that fall upon a land that is afflicted by this curse, hat a Government, whose first duty it is to protect property, inead of that becomes the spoliator of property in its turn. The aitators may tell you that it is the rich man, the comparatively ich man, who is in question, and that it is he who will suffer he effect of such laws. But economical laws are pitiless in teir action. It is not the rich man who will mainly suffer when onfidence is destroyed. When confidence is destroyed capital vill not flow, enterprise cannot be created, wages must fall, and ommerce must stagnate; and when the Government, under the pressure of electoral motives, commits a breach of the right of property, apparently for the sake of a class whom you are old is poor and suffering, depend upon it that in the long-run he class which lives by industry will be the sufferer, because he Government has departed from the right and honest way.

There is another matter to which I should like to refer, becase it is a question which justifies, I think, the activity and he energy of those Associations whose addresses have been kidly presented to me, and which is likely to occupy at a very erly time the attention of Scotsmen—I mean the Established Chrch of this country. Now, remember you are constantly told that he distinction between the Conservative and the Liberal party is iat the Liberals are the party of progress, and the Conservatves desire to stand still. Now, in the first instance, I deny that he Conservatives desire to stand still. We know very well thatwe live in a changing world, but all that we say is—before gat changes are made in the fundamental laws and institutions of his country, and the principles which have been handed down fo a long time, let us be certain that the change commends itsel to the settled will and judgment of the people of this country, nd is not adopted in obedience to the wishes of a chance majoty. But when the Liberals tell you they are the party of progress, i it impertinent to ask them where they are progressing to? A an may tell you that he is a great walker, and is undertaking a prdtable journey; but if you ask him where he is going to, andhe was unable to say, you would think he was a very odd sort of undertaker. Where is the point to which this progress is to led? I suppose there is some fixed point at which everybody, accordng to this hypothesis, would be a Conservative. I presume the mst advanced of our Radical friends have particular things in tir minds—though they won't disclose them—which if they had ot they would then be Conservative, and desire to stop there. ut what we wish to know is the point to which they desire to go. And there is no matter in respect to which this frankness wold be more desirable than in regard to this question of the Estb-

lished Church. You know how the question has arisen. Some thirty or forty years ago, owing to a very unfortunate decision on the part of a nobleman — who is not a nobleman to whom Conservatives look back with much affection—the great schism of the Free Church occurred. But in the first instance, and for many years, that division was a matter of purely religious concern, with which politicians were not required to trouble themselves. The Free Church fully recognised that it was the duty of the State to maintain an Established Church. But then came in the agitators—then came in the missionaries of discontent—then came in that party who live by creating division between the various classes of her Majesty's subjects—and they have turned the religious issue into a political one; and now the political conflict in Scotland threatens the subversion of the most ancient institution of Scotland, and one closely bound up with all the vicissitudes and fortunes of the country.

It is not necessary that I should dilate to you upon the advantages of an Established Church. You know that it is at once the great security for the presence of religious ministrations, alike in rich and in poor districts; and at the same time it is a security that the great influence of the Church shall be exercised in a manner that is advantageous, and in harmony with the welfare of the State. I do not for a moment say that the Church cannot exist without the State. I know well that it is otherwise; but a Church divorced from the State runs two risks. There is always the risk that the individual ministers will be tempted, and perhaps forced, to excite the zeal and to secure the support of their particular congregations by the constant administration of unwholesome spiritual stimulants, and there is the other danger that the Church itself will not be subject to that modifying influence of the laity, so favourable to toleration and to breadth, which is the result of the influence which the Establishment confers upon the State. The loss of the connection with the State will be the loss of a great power for good, and the loss of a security that influence would be constantly exercised with wisdom and with moderation. I am more concerned to call your attention to the dangers which these great and venerated institutions may run at this time. You were told again and again at the last election that the issue of disestablishment was not immediately before the country, and that the country would be consulted again before such an issue could be dealt with. But the point that I think was not sufficiently considered by those to whom the Established Church is precious in this country is, that if you place in power the enemies of the Established Church, even though they may not at once proceed to the exercise of that power to its detriment, you place in their power the opportunity of so modifying and

manipulating electoral arrangements, that at a future time the Church will be at their mercy.

I can see that those desiring disestablishment, both in this country and across the Border, are supporting the present Government in spite of many discouragements—in spite of being compelled very often to eat their principles, and to approve of that which they should denounce, because they hope from this Government may proceed some manipulation of the machinery by which Parliaments are elected, which shall enable them in the future to attain their ends. It is against that you have to guard. That is the great danger which requires the constant attention of the Conservatives. To those who consider the state of our institutions at this time, and under the spirit which now dominates the conduct of affairs, it is alarming to see how great their insecurity and instability are. Everything depends on the results, whatever they may be, of the chance humour, or the passing caprice of that one day on which a general election is held. You know what a general election is. You know the kind of questions which affect this or that constituency. You know how one constituency votes this way or that way because a particular harbour has not been made. Another constituency is animated by the temperance movement, a third by the anti-vaccination movement, a fourth by a fondness for some particular local dignitary, and a fifth by the unpopularity of some other local dignitary; and there are a thousand other secondary motives or transient motves, even be they of momentary importance, which go to make up the decision on which the proudest of your institutions may depend. The lasting and far-reaching power which is given to the decision of one particular day—to a decision which often is not promoted by any consideration of the great questions Parliament will have to decide—that is, in my mind, the strongest argument and incentive to careful organisation and the careful arrangement of your electoral forces. You never know when the danger may be upon you. You never know when the moment for exertion shall arrive; but you do know that great institutions, such as your ancient Church of Scotland, are in that hour committed to your keeping; that if you then neglect your trust, evils will follow that you cannot repair. And I know no stronger incentive to that energy and activity of which these Associations whose addresses I have now received bear such distinguished evidence than the consideraion that, upon the industry with which they pursue, and the judgnent with which they achieve the great objects for which they exist, will depend the averting of dangers that we all of us dread to look upon,—the saving of institutions which generations have regarded with respect, the prevention of results which the latest generaion

of their descendants may deeply regret, but which no subsequent efforts shall have the power to reverse.

Gentlemen, I feel that on this side of the Border the exhortation to electoral union and to electoral activity is invested with even more importance than any words that could be uttered in England, because here the danger is more immediate, and therefore greater interests at issue. When you are asked to help, when you are asked to join in the efforts which other Conservatives are making, remember that upon your refusal or upon your cordial acquiescence depends whether or not you will bear a worthy part in defending that institution which all Scotland is bound to honour and revere.

SPEECH

FOLLOWING ON THE

PRESENTATION OF THE EARL OF DALKEITH'S PORTRAIT TO THE COUNTESS OF DALKEITH.

25TH NOVEMBER 1882.

MR CHAIRMAN, MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,—

As an old friend for many years of the noble Duke, and as a member of the Conservative party, I have been permitted to say a few words—and they shall be very few—in support of this motion which has now been submitted to you. In appearing before this audience, it is difficult not to remember that this particular hall has within the last two or three years acquired a historical reputation in reference to enterprises that were undertaken in this county against the influence and family of the Duke of Buccleuch, and in reference to certain very remarkable and striking and influential sentiments which were addressed to audiences here. They were shown to me this morning. If I were to repeat them here, I am afraid you would think they were so incongruous with the present state of affairs, that I was laughing at you. I remember noticing that it was in this hall that the most thrilling, the most pious, denunciations were levelled against those who pointed the terrible implements of modern artillery against uncivilised races. I wonder if, with the distinguished orator who uttered those sentiments, it crossed his mind that within three years he would be directing those who served the Queen to point far more terrible implements of artilery against uncivilised races in another part of Africa? And there was also a sentiment about burning villages which took very much at the time—an appeal to the ladies of this county to think of the fearful sufferings of those who were turned out of their villages, and of the guilt of those whose warlike operations led to the destruction of those villages. I wonder if it occurred to him that it

would be his fate within three years to direct military operations which would have the effect of burning, not villages, but one of the proudest cities of the earth, and to initiate operations of which the effect would be the appalling misery that results from turning on the world the inhabitants—the peaceful inhabitants—of a vast city. I do not, of course, refer to these things for the purpose of insinuating that any moral guilt lies upon the right hon. gentleman. I do not think so; but I think that events have proved to him and to you, and possibly will prove to others in this part of the country, that those pious and noble sentiments were uttered a little recklessly and hastily—that they were not really a just foundation for the measureless denunciations which were delivered at the time against the Government that then ruled in this country, and at those who, like my noble friend and the noble Duke, supported it; and that men will learn not to trust entirely to the effusiveness and the seeming religiousness of political denunciations, but to measure their just application to the facts before them. However, the matter which I wish to press upon your attention is of a more peaceful kind. I desire rather to dwell, not upon the defects of his assailants, but upon the individual merit of the noble Duke himself. As a politician he occupies a remarkable and a very distinguished position. His career, if you will examine it, has a remarkable merit of judgment and moderation and far-sightedness which few of the passing generation of statesmen have imitated. At the great crisis of the Corn Laws in 1845 it was given to him, I think almost alone among the Ministry of Sir Robert Peel, on the one hand, to see that the position of agricultural protection was not tenable, and was one which ought not to be defended; and on the other hand, to see that the difference from his party in that respect was no sort of justification for changing his opinions and allies on all other political matters. And therefore it was that he, I think alone, while joining the Ministry of Sir Robert Peel in that which was a right and necessary act, when that controversy was over, quietly took his rank again by the side of those to whom his former opinions had always united him. Many, too many of his colleagues, and Mr Gladstone at their head, appeared to find in that one difference of opinion a justification for renouncing all that they had ever supported, and supporting all that they had formerly opposed. It is no slight merit in a statesman that he was able to resist the luring example of so many distinguished colleagues, and to draw the line between adhering to doctrines that were obsolete and untenable and the opposite excess to which so many of his friends rushed, of throwing over and changing their political convictions altogether. What he has been in public he has been in private—the same calm, moderate, equable, just, and energetic man. I need not

dwell upon his private virtues to you, for they are well known to you by personal experience; but it is impossible not to see in the influence, which through a long life he has maintained, a testimony to the virtues by which that influence has been deserved. In some other lands it might be said that his rank and his great wealth were of some account in the power he had obtained and the attachment that was tendered towards him; but in modern Scotland, at least, that is not the case. Here, I believe, in this thriving and busy population, where the constant creation of wealth tends to stimulate the sentiment of equality—here, I believe if a man who has great wealth and rank, at the same time preserves a vast influence and popularity, it is a conspicuous proof of the personal merits by which that popularity has been earned. Through a long life he has devoted himself with unflagging and ungrudging labour to the various and complicated duties which his high position has imposed upon him, and he has obtained as his reward a widespread attachment, which it has been given to few to obtain, and fewer still to deserve.

APPENDIX.

"TO THE MOST NOBLE THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G., &c. &c. &c.

"We, the members of the City of Edinburgh Conservative Association, beg to offer your Lordship a hearty welcome to the capital of Scotland. We hail your presence among us as a fresh proof of the cordial relations which subsist between the Conservative party and its leaders. In all the vicissitudes of political fortune you have maintained our principles with unfailing courage and constancy, and you possess in the fullest measure our gratitude and our confidence. Your past services to the nation are matters of history, and no detraction can dim their lustre. We do not forget that you were the associate of Lord Beaconsfield in restoring Great Britain to her rightful place in the councils of Europe, in maintaining her honour not by war but by diplomacy, and in securing fresh guarantees for the peace of the world; and if the full advantage of these great achievements has been imperilled by the rash language and the vacillating conduct of your successors in office, you have witnessed the vindication of your policy, not less in the success which has attended its imitation than in the ignominy which has followed its reversal. In the illustrious House whose best traditions are embodied in your person, and to whose patriotism the country owes so much of its order and its freedom, your influence is deservedly paramount. We feel assured it will always be used on behalf of those ancient and popular principles in which lie the best hopes both of individual liberty and of national strength. Ere long, we trust, it will again be wielded with all the weight that attaches to a Minister of the Queen.

"*In the name and on behalf of the Association,*

"T. GRAHAM MURRAY,
Chairman."

The Address, which was read amid cheering at the intervals, was also signed by the Chairmen of the Conservative Associations of West Aberdeenshire, East Aberdeenshire, Berwickshire, Old Deer and Longside, Clackmannanshire, Dumfriesshire, Fifeshire, Forfarshire, East Lothian, Kincardineshire, Kinross-shire, Kirkcudbrightshire, Linlith-

gowshire, Mid-Lothian, Mid-Calder and Kirknewton, West Calder, Colinton, Dalkeith, Penicuik, Peeblesshire, Perthshire, Roxburghshire, Hawick District, Jedburgh District, Melrose District, Selkirkshire District, Wigtownshire, City of Aberdeen. Arbroath Burgh, Cupar-Fife Burgh, Dunbar Burgh, Dunfermline Burgh, Eastern District of Edinburgh, Northern of Edinburgh, Southern of Edinburgh, South-Western of Edinburgh, Western of Edinburgh, Forfar District of Burghs, Haddington Burgh, Hawick Branch of the Border Burghs, Jedburgh United, Kirkcaldy, Kirkcudbright Burgh, Leith, Linlithgow Burgh, Maxwelltown, Musselburgh, North Berwick, City of Perth, Portobello, St Andrews Burgh, Selkirk Burgh, Whithorn Burgh, Wigtown Burgh, Edinburgh University, St Andrews University, Peebles Conservative Club, Aberdeen Conservative Club, Dumfries and Maxwelltown Junior Conservative Association, Committee of Management of the Dumfries Conservative Association, Edinburgh Conservative Working Men's Association, Aberdeen Conservative Working Men's Association, &c.

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Stieth

AUTHORISED EDITION.

I.

LAND AND "FAIR TRADE."

SPEECH

DELIVERED BY THE

RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE,

IN THE TOWN HALL AT LEEDS,

In reply to the Addresses presented by the Liberal Associations,

ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7TH, 1881,

In the Morning.

Printed for the Liberal Central Association, 41 and 42, Parliament Street, Westminster, S. W.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

As my occupations have not permitted me to correct the report of this speech, it has been kindly revised by a friend. The same office was performed on my behalf with regard to my speeches in Midlothian by my friend, Mr. C. Parker, M.P.—W. E. G.

LAND AND "FAIR TRADE."

Mr. Gladstone, who was received with loud and prolonged cheering, then rose and said: Mr. Kitson, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am very sorry to exchange the delightful business of listening to the music we have just heard for the active office of providing you with sound of a far inferior order. But necessity, ladies and gentlemen, is laid upon me, and will excuse me in your eyes. With respect to the mass of the addresses which I have just received from the hands of so many good and gallant soldiers in a good cause, I will only venture to assure you in general that these addresses and the circumstances under which they have been presented to me will not pass away from my mind as readily as I was compelled to discharge them from my hand, in order that I might not appear before you in an unbecoming position. The contents of these addresses, gentlemen, so far as they have been read, or as I am acquainted with them, introduce a variety of topics, from which I can only during this visit to Leeds attempt to make a selection, and even with the whole of that selection I shall not attempt to deal upon this single occasion. But there are two expressions, two sentiments that have come before me of which I am desirous to take special notice. I begin in the first place with the address which was read from the Association of which you (Mr. Kitson) are the head. In that address, almost affectionate, and certainly touching in its terms, I received no expression with greater gratification than that in which it was generously said that you believed that to whatever party I had belonged in the course of my life I had acted

with a sincere desire for the public good. I will not affect to disclaim that statement, because I really belive it to be true. And, moreover, I sometimes think —though I am in many points much misunderstood— that the fact of my having in view the public good, with a true and earnest purpose, was of itself a very great assistance in the enlightenment of my mind upon those points upon which it required to be enlightened, and has helped to land me, gentlemen, in the ranks of the party with which I have now in general acted for 35 years, and of which, during the short remainder of life, I hope to be, and am convinced I shall be a sympathising and an earnest member.

I wish to say one word of the Conservative party as it was in the time when I was associated with it. It was then led by Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington—two illustrious names which never can be heard in this assembly, or in any assembly of Englishmen like this, except with cordial respect and veneration. And I rejoice to say, gentlemen, of the Conservative party of that day, that it was associated with you in what are now many of your most distinctive principles. The Liberal party of that period—I mean between the first Reform Act and the repeal of the Corn Laws—was attached to public economy and purity of administration; but the Conservative party of that period maintained no unequal rivalry with you in the pursuit of these great objects. They were common—I say it fearlessly—they were common and without distinction to all parties. And I wish I could always see in every gentleman who calls himself a Liberal the same sense of strict public duty in regard to economy in public expenditure which was as characteristic of Sir Robert Peel—I will even venture to say—as it was of the distinguished and admirable, although now nearly perhaps forgotten, public servant, Joseph Hume. Not in respect of these subjects alone, but in regard to a nater

which has a large place in your hearts and understandings —in regard to foreign policy—I say it fearlessly, that there are two principles of enormous weight in which I, at least, have had nothing to change—the principle that every other country is to be credited with the same good motives as ourselves until it has given proof to the contrary, and that every Power, great and small, is entitled to exactly the same rights and exactly the same treatment. I will say that that was as distinctive a principle of the Conservative party together with the Liberals of those days as it is of the Liberal party now. And yet once more, that which is called the policy of peace, that which is so often held up as a mark of ridicule and scoffing in the Tory meetings of to-day—that policy of peace was as dear to Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Wellington, and Lord Aberdeen, and was as sedulously and fearlessly pursued by them as it ever has been, or ever can be, by any public man in the service of his country.

In one other preliminary remark in these addresses reference has been made to my past in terms too indulgent, and to my future, I am afraid, in terms too hopeful. It is not for me, gentlemen, at my time of life, with my nearness to its inevitable close, to anticipate those future years of strength and of service which you are good enough to desire on my behalf. But yet, gentlemen, though I don't indulge in any such anticipations,—for I confess that I feel that repose of mind and reflection on other matters are more appropriate to the latest stage of this our human existence,—yet I don't on that account look forward with the slightest lack of confidence to your future as the Liberal party of this country. Whenever it may be my duty to hand over the charge that is now intrusted to me, little worthy as I am, I shall hand it over to men who already possess your confidence—who already have proved in many a well-fought field what mettle they are made of. I do not mean

only to speak of one whose distinguished name is dear o every heart among you—I mean my excellent friend Mr. Bright—because he, too, is but one stage behind me in tle journey through the vale of years; but I speak of Lod Granville, of whom most intimate, almost daily, communication during many anxious years has given me the most thorough knowledge of his great abilities, of his admirabe devotion to the service of his country, and of his capaciy to serve it, if Providence should so ordain, in a yet higher place. I speak of Lord Granville, and I speak of Lord Hartington, who, in the struggles of the Houe of Commons, has likewise earned the confidence of tle country, and has enabled you to build your high expectatios of his future upon an ample experience of whathe hs been to you in the past. And therefore I look forwad with confidence to the Liberal party as in no degre dependent upon the slender thread, as yet unbroken, of ny own political life.

I believe, gentlemen, and I think you believe with ne, that under all ordinary and normal circumstances, though this country is divided between two classes of politial opinions, the Liberal opinion is that of the majority of tle people; and I go a little further and say this: when ve were defeated in 1874 we were not defeated through tle energies and the growth of Toryism, but we were defeatd by divisions that had unhappily insinuated themselves amongst us. And it was not the absolute breaking up of tle party, for that, of course, was a thing never dreamt of; but it was the prevalence of perhaps some sectional ideas or the natural and necessary shortcomings, or at any rate tle actual shortcomings of myself and of others who led them —at any rate it was our own divisions—it was because our several regiments did not march steadily up to the breach in 1874 that we were in a minority in the last Parliament. What I wish to say to you, gentlemen, is this—I see no

signs of such divisions now. I doubt whether for 30 years—I mean since the great Free Trade struggle—the Liberal party, speaking generally, has been in a state so healthy; and never have I had occasion so much to appreciate, along with its generous indulgence, the signs of that cordial union as during the anxious experiences of the long Session of Parliament just passed. Therefore, gentlemen, as you may look back with confidence upon your past, so I say fearlessly you may rely upon your future. It depends upon yourselves to maintain that energetic union. If there were any needless divisions in 1874, I think the consequences of those divisions have administered an altogether sufficient warning, and that if we erred in the past, we are not likely to fall into these errors again.

Mr. Kitson and gentlemen, I came to Leeds for the proper and primary purpose, not of repaying, but to acknowledge a threefold debt of gratitude which I never can repay, but which I can cordially acknowledge. You returned me to Parliament, as has been truly said, under circumstances on which I need not comment at length; yet a word or two I may say upon the fact that I appear before you as Member for Mid-Lothian, and not as Member for Leeds. It was, gentlemen, to me a great personal consolation and satisfaction that I was never called upon from the course of circumstances to exercise the option between Leeds and Mid-Lothian, as my seat for both was lost by the acceptance of office before the time came for doing so. But at the same time, gentlemen, I may remind you of what you know as well as I do—why I am Member for Mid-Lothian and not Member for Leeds. The citadel of Toryism in Leeds is not so very strong but that a moderate force might hope to carry it. But that was not the case with reference to the citadel of Toryism in Mid-Lothian. It frowned down upon the county like that old Castle of Edinburgh from the rock that overhangs the city; and the gallant men of

that county invited me, and I could not for very shame's sake refuse their invitation, to try and scale the rock, and make ourselves masters of the castle. And while we were fighting in Mid-Lothian there was no loss to anybody in leaving you to deal, with your unassisted force, with the Toryism of Leeds. Gentlemen, you have also conferred on me a favour that I should in vain attempt adequately to acknowledge, in your acceptance of my son as one of your Members. I cannot trust myself, and it would be quite unnecessary if I could, to speak in detail upon that subject I will only express the hope that you will be repaid for your generosity by his devotion, and my confidence that he will never do anything to dishonour either the name he bears, or, what is much more important, the great community with which you have been pleased to associate his fortunes. I have mentioned, gentlemen, two points of the threefold debt; but there was one event that left a deeper impression on my mind than either of those that we have mentioned. It was an event much less conspicuous in the public eye; it was the appearance of that deputation who, not in the hour of success, not in the hour of hope, but when the skies were darkest and the prospects of public fortune lowest, came to see me in London, and, without asking from me any reply, without even permitting me by any sort of condition to reply, told me of their intention to select me as their candidate and return me for Leeds. I thought that the undoubted determination, the thorough pluck that was shewn by those gentlemen of Leeds in forming that plan at that time, was an event which should have impressed me with the belief, if I had wanted fresh evidence of it, how worthy they are to belong to the great county with which they are associated, and what good representatives they were of the best public spirit of England. For the spirit which then prevailed was not the spirit which is now in the ascendant. There are to be found, gentlemen,

in every country the elements of a temper which is apt to display itself in assumption and arrogance and aggression — in every community there will be such elements; but in this community they never become dangerous unless they receive countenance from the leaders of one of the great political parties; and then, of necessity, they become very dangerous. That is a temper which, when we see it in other countries, we all condemn. It is just as well known in France as it is here. In France it passes, as you all know under the name of Chauvinism. It is as like as two peas to that which we call here "Jingoism," and yet, strange to say, that portion of Englishmen who are most infected by "Jingoism" are most loud in their denunciations of Chauvinism. They say France has been under the influence of Chauvinism in the steps she has taken in the province of Tunis, and their denunciations are unbounded. I won't now enter into that question, but I will say this, that if they are right in what they say, they are not the people to reproach France for what she has done, for they are the people who have endeavoured—aye, and I am sorry to say on some recent occasions with some success—to lead this great nation into the exhibition of a similar temper, and to allow it to dominate in the direction of its public affairs. Gentlemen, it is as a protest against the prevalence of that spirit, as you well know, that your deputation came from Leeds; that you have framed many parts of the addresses presented to me; and that I (who had fondly believed that the hour of my retirement had arrived some years before) have again been for the time brought into the front rank of political conflict. I therefore acknowledge the threefold debt I owe to Leeds for returning me to Parliament, for the return of my son, and for the remarkable exhibition of determined intention in the hour of need, and when the policy to which we are

attached was, to all appearance, less likely to prevail than it had appeared to me at any former moment.

And now, gentlemen, I will try to touch two points in particular, if you will allow me, of those that have been raised—variously and multifariously raised—in the addresses that are before me. It is not, gentlemen, that you want instruction upon these points; for in truth, if that were all, I do not know why in the world I should come to preach Liberal principles in Leeds, which would be an enterprise as bootless as "carrying coals to Newcastle." But what we say in Leeds on this occasion may possibly be heard in quarters where it is more wanted. Let me say something on subjects that have necessarily occupied much of my thoughts of late years—the subject of land and the subject of trade.

The subject of land has been pressed upon all our minds first of all by the legislation for Ireland, or rather, I will say, first of all by the great temporary depression of British agriculture; and, secondly, by the recent legislation for Ireland. Of that legislation for Ireland I will only say, upon the present occasion, that it was legislation for Ireland, and not for England or for Scotland. The circumstances of land in England and Scotland demand the close attention of the Government, and we have much to do with regard to it; but they are not the same as the circumstances of Ireland, and that which was most exceptional in the Act relating to Ireland, justified as it was in our minds and felt by the majority of Parliament to be justified by the peculiar circumstances of the condition of that country, cannot be held to have an equal or parallel application to a country whose condition has never been subjected to the action of such disturbing and distorting and paralysing forces as, unhappily, has been the case with respect to the various interests connected with the land in Ireland. But although that is so, and although I at least shall never be a party to the introduction of the

Irish Land Act into England, nor indeed do I believe that that is the desire of any sensible—I beg pardon, of any appreciable portion of the people of this country,—yet there is much to be done. And there are three points of view in which we may look at this question of the land. The first is to deal with it financially. And here you will observe, gentlemen, that our friends the Tories are very active ; indeed, I must compliment them upon their activity in general. People talk of a Parliamentary recess ; the leaders of the Tories do not appear to me to have any recess at all. Ever since the prorogation they have been at it, and no doubt they intend to continue until the next Queen's Speech. There is a passage in the vivid account of the French Revolution by Carlyle, where, in one of the preliminary stages, I think, he says, "Riots were sputtering all over the face of France;" and in the same manner Conservative meetings have been sputtering over the face of England. As, unhappily, I do not address you at a time when public affairs are free from circumstances of anxiety, as there are or may be storms in the air, it is natural enough that the storm-birds should go abroad and see what they can make of them, and they have paid me a particular compliment, for which I cannot be too grateful, for they have stopped me up, before and behind. Last night and the night before, and the night before that, I believe, and again I am told to-night, and then again next week, there are to be Conservative meetings with Conservative leaders, so as effectually to neutralise any mischief which may result from this little gathering. I feel myself, ladies and gentlemen, to be absolutely mobbed by these Conservative meetings. The order in this town is admirable, and I have not the least fear of being mobbed, but I feel that I am being mobbed by these extraordinary gatherings of last week, this week, next week, and all the weeks to come. Well, then, gentlemen, at these meetings there is a great deal

said on the subject of land, and here it is very necessary to warn you, and to warn the country. Let us see how the financial part of the question of land is dealt with by the Tory party.

I call you to witness, gentlemen, that for the last half-century down to the last year the favourite cry of the Tories was the repeal of the malt-tax. When the Government of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli or Lord Beaconsfield were in office, some way or other the malt-tax seemed to sit quite easy on the shoulders of the Tory party ; but wherever there was a Liberal Government in power, every opportunity was taken to shew that the malt-tax was an intolerable burden upon the British farmer, and that the thing to set him right and straight was to repeal the malt-tax. But the Tories never attempted to deal with the malt-tax. Sir Stafford Northcote, as Chancellor of the Exchequer for some six years, with the most obedient majority of the House of Commons at his back, never dreamt of repealing the malt-tax. But last year, before we were six months old as a Government, we determined to repeal the malt-tax. And why, gentlemen ? Not because we believed in the absurd pretensions that had been set up by the old malt-tax repealers, but because we knew, and had always admitted, that there were very important reasons for thinking that it was unjust. In the first place, the malt-tax disturbed us as Free Traders; and as Free Traders we could not approve of any tax that disturbed the action of all connected with farming in the country. It attached to the farming of certain soils which produced the finest barley a fictitious value in addition to its natural advantages. As Free Traders, we are opposed to all legislation that interferes with one description of commodity as against another. There was another reason why we repealed the malt-tax, and that is that you, as Liberals, have always been forward, and I hope always will be forward, to get rid

of any excise duty. That was an excise duty which positively had this effect with regard to a vast trade—for the value of the beer trade and of the different malt liquors produced in this country is such as to make it one of the largest trades in the country—that the old malt-tax absolutely prescribed to people out of what materials, and what materials alone, they should make their beer. In repealing the malt-tax, then, we were glad to give that which we believed to be just and right to the farming interest, and to give to British industry in yet another province that absolute freedom which we desired to see it enjoy. But what happened? That the Tories have turned their backs on the repeal of the malt-tax, and they now, without the slightest, or even decent, regard to their professions of half a century ago, say that it is a worthless, insignificant affair, and perhaps, on the whole, has in it more evil than good. It is difficult to deal with people who proceed in that way, and who, when you think you are making a justifiable approximation to their views, turn round upon you and denounce you in terms of violence, or else represent as totally unnecessary that which they have formerly held up as a capital article both of public justice and of national policy. Oh! but they have turned to other things. They tell the farmers, "We must have you relieved of a great deal of the burden of the rates." It is well worth while, gentlemen, for us to dig a little below the surface of that profession, and see what it means.

In the first place, gentlemen, don't suppose for a moment that in my opinion rates ought not to be dealt with. I, being an old man, may not have much to say to the matter, but if I were 20 years younger I would say there is nothing in regard to which I would more desire a large and extended change. I am an enemy of the present system of what are called grants in aid. Of course you will understand I am not laying down mathematical

propositions. I do not speak absolutely, but in general I see the greatest mischief in these grants in aid. It seens to me the object of the Tories, for the sake of obtaining tle votes of the farmers, is to extend these grants without limt. In the first place, I am against an extension of grants in ail, or of reliefs to the rates in any form, without a thorough consideration of the question of local government. Fir these grants in aid, what do they do? In the first plae they encourage extravagance. In the second place, thy promote centralisation, and they relegate to the offices n Downing Street matters which ought to be disposed of ly the local authorities in respective districts. In the thid place, they sap the very principles of local government ly depriving you of the means for the exercise of its functiors. And, gentlemen, I cannot pass by the subject of local government without impressing upon you that there is no one among you who discharges the office of local citizeiship who is more deeply impressed with its profound imporance than I am myself. Local government, gentlemei, is the training school for Imperial governmert. Habits formed in connection with local government ae the habits which enable this nation to find men in abudance, from time to time, thoroughly competent to cary on the business and the government of the country. Ard on all these grounds I think that the present system of grants in aid is a system that requires to be checked, ny requires to be greatly changed. It is also, in my opinio, a most impolitic system, upon this ground : the collectin of Imperial taxes is always a matter of serious politicl delicacy and, indeed, difficulty. The collection of taxs for local purposes is a thing comparatively easy. Nov, gentlemen, what I would say is this. In the first plac, remember what I am going to say now will have referenc, not to local taxes in towns, but to local taxes in tle country. The circumstances are exceedingly differeit.

They have increased in towns with a rapidity quite unknown in the country. And likewise the question of the ultimate incidence of the rate is a question much more open to debate and doubt in the populous districts than it is in the rural districts. But, upon my word, I must say of rates generally, and especially rates in the country, I think the time might come when it might be very proper to make large, direct allocations of public taxes to the local communities for them to expend, subject to fixed rules, laid down by the State, as economically and beneficially as they can. Gentlemen, I must endeavour to bring into view that which it seems to be the object of Toryism to keep out of view, and it is this—that every sixpence which you take off the rates in an agricultural district in this country, while it is an immediate relief to the tenant, is an ultimate gift to the landlord; and, taking that point of view, the demand that something shall be taken off taxation from the general exchequer of the country in order to be applied to the payment of rates in rural districts, while it may be very agreeable to the farmer for the moment—and I do not at this moment inquire what ought to be done for him—is a demand of the landlords of this country that their descendants shall, to that extent, be quartered upon the public exchequer. Now, gentlemen, that is a very serious matter for consideration. And when I say this I speak as one whose fortunes and the fortunes of his family are closely connected with the prosperity of agriculture, but who, at the same time, will always strive to prevent any bias from taking possession of his mind on that ground in the consideration of these great subjects.

Well, the question of dealing with the landlords and the land embraces, as respects landlords, the great subjects of the

devolution of land, the transfer of land, the registry of land, and the mode of borrowing upon land. These are subjects of great importance to all persons connected with land, on which I hope that the present Government, whether while I am in it or after I cease to belong to it, will deal efficiently and fearlessly. There is another part of the question of land yet more urgent, and that is that which touches the tenant. The true interest of the farmer, the just object of the farmer is to have his interest in the land made secure. I see there are some professions made in these Tory meetings that they are quite willing that that should be done. Willing that it should be done! Why, they told us five years ago that they had done it. They passed a Bill which they called the Agricultural Holdings Bill, and that was the great legislative achievement of the six or seven years of the late Government. That was the summit of what they could do for the farmers, to whom they owed their existence. I have heard that constantly quoted. I ordered a good many copies of the Bill, and in order to see if they could make anything out of it, I sent it among the tenantry. I sent copies—I thought it would be best not to scatter them wholesale, and I selected two or three—to the intelligent, the most intelligent, men among the farmers; but I could not get them to look at it. They absolutely neither knew nor cared one farthing about it. That Bill was the most complete abortion that I have ever known in the handling of a great legislative subject. And this abortion was the only achievement of an Administration that lasted six or seven years. However, the question has arisen, and arisen in a very serious form, in consequence of the pressure upon the farmer due to a series of unfavourable seasons. I will not enter into any details as to modes of proceeding. As I have said that in my opinion the Irish Land Act ought not to become the English or Scotch Land Law, I say as emphatically that it is an object of capital and

immediate importance for the farmer to see that effectual and not abortive measures are taken to secure the whole interest of the tenants, not part of that interest, but the whole interest—his interest in his improvements and his interest, as the law may define it, in his tenure. There is here a point of junction between trading and landed interests in relation to the matter we are discussing. The trade of the country has been severely and even lamentably depressed, in certain branches particularly. It has been depressed first of all, I believe, in what I shall call this district, because, although I don't mean the town of Leeds in particular—perhaps in some degree the town of Leeds—I mean very much more the great sister town of Bradford —that district which, as far as there has been a pressure due to the special action of foreign competition, may be thought, and thought justly, to have experienced that pressure.

I won't trouble you in a great assembly of this kind with a number of figures, but those figures shew the case very simply. Taking the woollen and worsted manufactures together, and taking our trade with certain countries, namely, France, Germany, and Holland, and Belgium, I believe it is the case that our imports of woollen and worsted goods have come very close upon our exports. The figures, so far as I can make them out, are these. We export £8,650,000, and we import £8,509,000. That is very nearly a balance. I will not now discuss the question whether it is in the power of the capitalists and the industrial interests of this country to amend that balance; my own belief is that it is. I often say that the English producer wants a good deal of pressure upon him to make him do his best, but that when the pressure is put upon him he will compete successfully with anybody in the world—unless he were to make an attempt where the natural circumstances are entirely and absolutely against

him. I won't go into that, but I take this point, because it enables me to raise conveniently a question to which I think it necessary to allude. The question is not whether the depression of the last few years has been severe, for it has been severe. I, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, have had to lament it. It is not true that the revenue has yet recovered from the effect of it. The revenue, as on the last quarter day, was, I think, in the Press estimated rather more favourably than it deserved. It may be said that the revenue is somewhat recovering from it, but it is very far indeed from complete recovery, although I have no doubt this complete recovery will arrive. But, gentlemen, what has been the main cause of this depression of our trade? Now that is a most important question, because systematic attempts are made to persuade you—and though they won't succeed here they may succeed elsewhere—to persuade you—I mean the people of England—that the main cause of our depression has been that we cannot carry on our trade with foreign countries in consequence of the pressure of hostile tariffs, and, as a consequence, that Free Trade is a failure.

Now let us look at the basis of fact which is under this monstrous doctrine. I observe that those who write upon these subjects on the wrong side very generally avoid specific facts and deal with generalities, and I think that is a proof of a very great deal of sound discretion on their part. When they get out of that tangled and cloud region and come to deal with facts, they get into sad scrapes. Here is a case. You had not long ago a noble Lord condescending to come into the neighbourhood of Leeds, and endeavouring to enlighten the people in this neighbourhood as to the terrible dangers we are in from foreign competition. Lord Lascelles quoted a statement made by Mr. James Lowther in Lincolnshire, that a great railway

station had recently been erected at York. And so far, gentlemen, I congratulate the noble Lord and Mr. James Lowther on their accuracy as to that fact. That would not have answered the purpose, however, and so they went to produce for once a fact instead of generality and the fact was this, that this great station at York was built of Belgian iron. That statement, I believe, has been contradicted in the newspapers, but contradictions never obtain a currency so wide as an original statement of that kind. This was a very authentic fact, but it had not a shadow of foundation—as you know very well. While Lord Lascelles, at Kirkstall, was instructing his audience that the York station was built of Belgian iron, if, instead of importing information from Lincolnshire, he had come for information to Leeds, everybody would have told him that the iron for that station was made by you, sir (Mr. Kitson); and that the erection of the station was conducted by Mr. Butler, of Leeds also. I hope our Tory friends will take this statement in the spirit in which it is made. I recommend them not to deal with matters of fact in the future, but to confine themselves cheerfully to generalities, where nobody can grapple with them.

The question as a matter of fact is, has the pressure of foreign tariffs—which I do not undervalue, as you will see by-and-bye — been or not been the main cause of the depression of trade? Now, you will agree with me in this, that the main cause of the depression of trade has been either the unwillingness or inability of foreign countries to buy, or it has been the decrease of the purchasing power at home. Let us see which of these has been the main factor in that depression because it is upon the assumption that the foreign question is the great cause that is founded the recommendation now so confidently made to go back to the state of things we parted with some 30 years ago. Now, I want to

measure—and it is possible to do it without much difficulty, and with sufficient, though not minute, accuracy—I want to measure what has been the amount of depression or contraction of our foreign trade, and what, on the other hand, has been the decrease of the purchasing power at home. I take the year which presented the very highest amount of exports—256 millions of British and Irish goods and produce. I will assume—though you all know very well that those 256 millions were exported with an inflated state of prices, a state of prices that could not possibly be maintained, a state of prices which, as regarded the iron and coal trade, was totally unexampled—but assuming that volume of trade as the natural state of things, which is an enormous assumption, I will shew you what is the decrease in the purchasing power, the actual loss to the people of this country that has accrued through the depression in connection with our foreign trade. If the value of the exports had continued in 1878, 1879, and 1880, the three years of great agricultural depression, and of depression in trade and commerce—if that high scale of exports had continued, we should have exported in those years 768 millions of goods and produce; instead of which we have only exported 607 millions. That was a decrease of 161 millions in three years ; but of course it was not all loss. What was lost was the profit upon that decrease, and I take the profit at the rate at which it is usually assumed —namely, 10 per cent., and I shall shew you in that way that the country was 16 millions poorer in consequence of the contraction of its foreign trade. There should be a further item put down, which I will allow for liberally. I will assume that there was an additional loss of eight millions in the profit of the carrying trade of those 16 millions by this country to foreign countries. And if I add the eight millions to the 16 millions, I shew that this country is perhaps 24 millions the poorer. I have

endeavoured to make the allowances against myself, and I assume—though it is doubtful—that the country is 24 millions the poorer—a very serious amount—in consequence of the contraction of our foreign trade since the time when our exports were at the maximum.

Now let me turn to the effect of the bad harvests. What have been our losses by bad harvests in 1878, 1879, and 1880? and, of course, when I speak of harvests I speak of the whole agricultural produce of the land, including root crops, grass, and everything. Gentlemen, I believe it is a moderate estimate over the three kingdoms to place that loss at 120 millions sterling. Many place it higher, considerably higher. I am convinced, if I were only to take the reductions of rent that have occurred, and the allowances upon rents, that it is a moderate statement to say that the agricultural products in these three years fell short by 120 millions sterling in the aggregate of what they would have been if the harvests had been good. That is all sheer loss except that there was a saving on the getting in of all the goods represented by the 120 millions. Let us suppose that the expenses of getting in the agricultural crop are upon the average one-sixth, taking all descriptions of agricultural produce together. Well, then, even if the farmer, in losing £120,000,000 on his produce, saved £20,000,000, which he would have expended in getting it in, the loss would still be £100,000,000. And, gentlemen, what we shew therefore, is this, that while it is an extravagant statement to say that the country was £24,000,000 poorer on account of the contraction of its foreign trade, it is not an extravagant statement to say that it was £100,000,000 poorer on account of that remarkable series of deficient harvests in those years. The principal seat of this depression is not to be looked for in the pressure of foreign tariffs, though that is very serious. It is to be looked for in the bad

harvests. We may reasonably hope that these will not continue. The present harvest is one of great difficulty to judge of. I have made the best inquiries in my power, and I believe it is distinguished almost beyond any other harvest we have had by its inequality. The returns in certain cases are admirable ; in other cases they are very deficient. Some important crops, from the failure of which we have greatly suffered of late years, such as potatoes, are—at all events in our neighbourhood, and, this, of course, is a thing we have nothing but local knowledge to go by—abundant and healthy almost beyond precedent. I saw two or three nights ago, dug up in a cottage garden, a potato which weighed 1lb. 5oz. ; and anyone who is accustomed at all to these things will know what sort of a potato season—the root also being healthy—it is that gives results like these. But that I do not dwell upon. It is a safe thing to say that no adverse decree of Providence has gone forth against the harvests of this country, and that we shall hope for a recurrence of average fruitfulness in future years which will restore the home market, the greatest by far of the markets in which we are interested, to a better state.

But this depression is made the subject of an attempt to propagate a great and most mischievous delusion. An institution has been formed with the imposing name of the National Fair Trade League. What, gentlemen, is its object, and what is its meaning ? It bears a suspicious likeness to our old friend Protection. Protection was dead and buried 30 years ago. He has come out of his grave and is walking abroad, and his long experience of the atmosphere below ground has not made his looks a bit more attractive than they used to be before he was the subject of that experience ; and the consequence is that he has found it convenient to assume an *alias*, and if you met him in the street and said, " Oh, Mr. Protection, how do you do ?" he would say, " I beg your pardon, I know nothing

of Mr. Protection ; I am Mr. Fair Trade, and have no relationship whatever with Mr. Protection." And speaking seriously, gentlemen, although an article has been written in perfect good faith by Mr. Protection himself in the "Nineteenth Century," there is a very good antidote to it. The name at the foot of it is that of Mr. Ecroyd, the Member for Preston ; but Mr. Ecroyd actually says that he writes in the name of Fair Trade. The name of Protection, as I have said, is kept back, but they are not satisfied with keeping back the name. Mr. Ecroyd, in the simplicity of his heart, writes a serious complaint and expresses a grave apprehension. He says he is very much afraid that the Fair Trade movement will be mistaken for Protection by those whose object it is to confuse the issue. He wants a good lump of duty put upon foreign manufacture ; he wants a duty of 5s. a quarter upon corn, and all this he says he wants, not at all for Protection, but in the name of "Fair Trade"; only he is afraid that some Liberals are actually so perverse that they will endeavour to represent that he is agitating for Protection. When I read this article it reminded me of a most amusing passage in an admirable book, which I hope will never cease to be a book that will be read in the homes of this country. It is "Gulliver's Travels." Everybody has read in it the history of men six inches high and of men sixty feet high, and the history of creatures more extraordinary still in all their conditions of life, who were not men, but one of the most strange tribes ever conceived. In closing the book Dean Swift says :—

"Thus, gentle reader, I have given thee a faithful history of my travels for 16 years and about seven months, wherein I have not been so studious of ornament as of truth. I could perhaps, like others, have astonished thee with strange, improbable tales, but what I rather chose to narrate has been matter of fact in the plainest style, because my simple desire was to inform, and not to delight. I heartily wish that a law were enacted under which every traveller should be compelled, on coming back to this country, to promise that he would tell what he had himself seen, and that he would tell nothing but the truth."

And just so, Mr. Ecroyd is quite ready to take an oath

that Fair Trade has nothing at all to do with Protection and he expects us to accept this doctrine just as Dean Swift expected us, or wittily affected to expect us, to believe that his fictions were facts, and that other people's facts were fictions.

Now what is this Fair Trade system? It proposes that we shall tax foreign manufactures in order that they may untax our manufactures. That is its first proposal. Well now, gentlemen, it appears to me to be a considerable exaggeration of a great Christian precept. There is a great Christian precept that if a man strikes you on one cheek you should "turn to him the other also;" but the precept with Mr. Ecroyd and others is, "if somebody smites you on one cheek you should smite yourself on the other also." That appears to me to be a needless exaggeration. But let that pass, and let us see whether the thing is practicable. We are to smite ourselves on the other; but we are to in order to induce somebody else to do something that he ought, but is not disposed, to do, and we are to force him to do it by hitting him. I think there is a good old English maxim, that if you are to strike you ought to strike hard. Can you strike the foreigner hard by retaliatory tariffs? What manufactures do you import from abroad? In all 45 millions. What manufactures do you export? Nearer 220 millions—over 200 millions. If you are to make the foreigner feel, you must make him feel by striking him in his largest interests; but the interest which he has in sending manufactures to you is one of his small interests and not of his large interests, and you are invited to inflict wounds on him on a field measured by 45 millions, while he has got exactly the same power of inflicting wounds upon you on a field measured by more than 200 millions. The case the people feel most is the case of America. I can't even now mention the case of America but

the thought will cross the mind of the great tragedy which has lately been enacted in that country. England has well acquitted herself of her duty, has well given vent to her sentiments on the death of President Garfield. We have seen him die with unparalleled suffering as a Christian and as a hero. That is recorded in the heart of this nation; it is like a new and perpetual pledge of amity and affection between the two countries; but notwithstanding that, and though I believe there is but one sentiment on that subject, yet people are very sore about the American tariff. The Americans hit us very hard with their duties, and there is a great reduction no doubt in our exports to America. But still how do we stand? America sends to us less than three millions of manufactured goods; we send to America—what between our own manufactured goods and the foreign and colonial produce which we have got for our manufactured goods,and which is therefore just the same—we send to America between 30 and 40 millions of manufactured goods. The advice of these Fair Traders is that we are to endeavour, by hitting America through these three millions which she sends to us, to make her cease from hitting us through the 30 and odd millions we are sending to her. It is impossible, gentlemen, to conceive that absurdity can further go. But there is more than this in the pleadings of many of the advocates of this system. It calls itself a Fair Trade League: it is a League for the most unfair trade I ever heard of. It has got unfairness as a birth-sin attached to it. The Fair Traders recommend different things to different people. To manufacturers they say: We recommend a duty upon manufactures, we do not recommend a duty upon foreign corn. But when they go to the farmer, they say they recommend a duty upon foreign corn, because they know very well that the farmer would justly object to pay an extra price upon labour saved by contrivances imported from

America, unless you offered him duty upon corn. And so Mr. Ecroyd, or Mr. Protection, argues in his paper that the duty upon foreign corn won't raise the price of corn in England. If it does not raise the price of corn in England, how is it to benefit the British farmer? I have got a recommendation for the National Fair Trade League. When they speak to the producer, no farmer is to listen; and when they speak to the farmer, no producer is to know; and upon these terms it appears to me that the National Fair Trade League may perhaps contrive for a time, and until it is found out, to drive a tolerable business. But it is not easy to fulfil this condition in this country; for, unfortunately, there are people who will tell producers what the Fair Trade League is saying to the farmer, and will tell the farmer what it is saying to the producer.

I have been detaining you upon what, on the field of pure argument, I consider is hollow delusion, which will not bear investigation for one moment. But there is a great deal more than pure argument in the matter. What I want to know is this: whether Fair Trade, or Protection is again to become a subject of national conflict between the parties of this country; and that is a very serious question indeed. For remember, gentlemen, what has formerly taken place. A quarter of a century of the legislative life of this country was spent without reserve on the solution of this great economical problem. From 1837 or 1838, when the first great battle on the Corn Law took place in the House of Commons and when the Anti-Corn Law League was founded, down to 1861, which was signalised by what I well know to have been a most difficult operation—the repeal of the paper duty—these five-and-twenty years were one succession of conflicts, which had for their whole aim the solution of this great problem. It was nearly a generation of the life of the nation we gave to it—almost everything else was

cast aside. Review the legislation of those years, and you will find little except this one memorable, conspicuous, I would almost say incomparable, triumph. A triumph more beneficent—more beneficent either to the material or the moral interests of man—I believe never was attained by public virtue and by public intelligence. But now we are told that Free Trade is an admitted failure, and I want to know, gentlemen, what the Tory party are going to do in this matter. I mean as far as it depends upon me to drive home the question. The leader of the Tory party in the House of Commons has, as I have said, been making frequent speeches in the country. In one of these speeches he held the precise language of the Fair Trade League. He said : "I am a Free Trader, but then I am for universal Free Trade." Exactly the language of the Fair Trade League. He went on to another place, and spoke a column of a newspaper on the subject, but I defy anyone to make out its meaning. Gentlemen, this is a very serious affair. One of his followers, one of his Privy Councillors, one of his colleagues, has won a seat in Lincolnshire by telling the farmers of Lincolnshire that he is for a 5s. duty on corn. I hold the words of the speech in my hand, and Mr. Lowther's election, you know, is held out as one of the conspicuous proofs that the people of England have changed their mind. Mr. Lowther has announced a 5s. duty on corn. Sir Stafford Northcote is speaking all over the land, and cannot tell us whether he is for a 5s. duty on corn or not. I say we have a right to know ; and it is necessary for his character and necessary for the character of his party that we should know ; and I will tell you why. Because, in my opinion, it is a painful and humiliating process that we should have to entertain this question at all. It is quite true that several foreign countries within the last few years have been aggravating their tariffs.

Shall I tell you why? Because they have national Fair Trade Leagues among them. They have been doing the very thing which a lot of people among you here desire we should do; and they, not having had the same amount of economical education we have had, and not having gone through these tremendous conflicts on this very question which we have had—conflicts of a quarter of a century ago—they have been more acted upon than I hope you will be; and I hope also that this is merely an epidemic mania, and that it will die away.

At any rate, let us consider what has happened. After our experience in the past it is humiliating, as I have said, that we should have to re-open this question. But how was this question treated by the Tory party before? They turned Sir Robert Peel out of office and smashed his party in 1846. They then said that Protection was necessary to save the country. They fought the general election of 1847 entirely upon that principle. They reconstructed their party upon that principle, and shut out of it everybody except Protectionists. They found it an excellent game, for it carried for them nearly all the counties of England. They kept it up sedulously as long as they were in Opposition. They came into office in 1852, and, gentlemen, what happened then? They then knew they had not a chance if they maintained the doctrine of Protection. For six years they had ruthlessly befooled the farmers of England; and were steeped in pledges over head and ears to restore the Corn Law. But when they came into office in 1852, and found that to be impossible, and when they were compelled, as they were in a minority, to dissolve Parliament, they sent a set of candidates down to the towns who were to be Derbyite Free Traders, and a set of candidates down to the counties who were to be Derbyite Protectionists. And, gentlemen, that is the experiment which apparently is about to be tried again. Mr. Lowther

has to go to North Lincolnshire and promise a 5s. duty on corn to the farmers, and win the seat for the county, and the Tory Press are glorifying themselves upon the change in the general opinion. But when they send their candidates to the towns, then they will be Free Trade candidates. They will look this way and that; they will say aye or no; they will say black, blue, or white. It is a great misfortune to a party that contains many honourable and excellent men that they had to go once through a process such as I have described. I do not think that has ever been the melancholy history of your party; but that the Tory party should go through that process twice, that it should again delude the country by raising the absurd phantom of prosperity to be attained through the adoption of a system which we know to be the sure means of impoverishment, and that it should at the same time seek, when it is convenient, to shirk the question by using vague and general language, and declining to give an intelligible opinion, that indeed would be intolerable.

Well, gentlemen, I think I am entitled to say that we should know what it is that the Tories mean to do upon this subject of Fair Trade. I read the last speech of Sir Stafford Northcote. I really am obliged to say that I may be confusing the one with the other—but in the one before Beverley, at Hull, I think, he dwelt at great length upon this subject. In that speech he said he did not approve of some of the remedies that had been propounded. Which could he not approve of? Did he or did he not approve of the remedy by which Mr. Lowther carried Lincolnshire? If he did, we know where we are. That which carried Lincolnshire will not carry England or Scotland. But if he does not approve of it, then I say, after what was done from 1846 o 1852 by the Tory party, it is time that they should hold intelligible language on this subject. I rejoice to think hat as Sir Stafford Northcote has got more speeches to

make, he has got the opportunity to tell, reluctantly it may be, whether he is or is not in favour of protective duties for manufactures, and of a 5s. duty on corn.

I think there is one evil we are all agreed about, and an immense evil it is—and that is, as we think, the besotted folly—perhaps that is not a respectful phrase to use about the proceedings of one's opponents; but really, in our judgment, using the word in its abstract sense, that is what we think of the system of laying protective duties on manufactures, whether they are ours or those of anybody else. Sir Stafford Northcote on the one side, and we on the other, have a common purpose in view. In his own convictions he is as instructed and as intelligent a Free Trader as you will find anywhere in this room or out of it. He understands the subject thoroughly, and there is his responsibility. Few of the men behind him understand it. And I say without hesitation that it depends on him, and depends on him perhaps alone, to determine whether this great question —solved after a quarter of a century of struggle — is again to become a national controversy or not. But now let us see. He holds unintelligible language; he palters with the question. Is that the way to get foreign Governments to undo the mischief they have done? We agree that it is a mischief. We want them to untax our goods. There are two specifics. One specific is to shew your consistency and the sincerity of your convictions by adhering to the system which has enormously increased the wealth and trade of the country, and has hardly added less to its power in other respects—to the solidity of its institutions and its moral advancement. Hold steadily by it, and if you believe, if as from experience you know, it is the truth, rely upon it truth will in time make its way. That is one specific. Another specific is that of Fair Trade—to tax foreign manufactures and to lay a 5s. duty on corn. It is a bad and delusive one. But bad as it is, and delusive as it is,

it is better than paltering with the question; it is better than standing first on your right leg, and next on your left, knowing not which leg you are standing on. It is better than winking with one eye at the towns and with the other eye at the counties, and contriving that they shall understand you in different senses. Whatever is to be done, that at least is not the way in which we can get foreign countries to untax our manufactures. It may be, I won't say it is, impossible, for nothing is impossible; but let us grant, for argument's sake, to the Fair Trader that it would compel them. I don't believe it would, though. Well, we do not think that we should compel them, but that in the course of time we shall induce them. If we could do it quicker we would most willingly expedite it. But if there is one way surer than another to keep them in the path of mischief it is to exhibit to them course of feeble double-mindedness, that does not know its own intention, that can find no words to speak an intelligible opinion upon matters which involve most vital interests to the country and the whole condition of the people.

Gentlemen, I have done; I will not detain you longer. I have detained you very long indeed. I may say more, perhaps, upon the dryer parts of the question in a smaller audience to-morrow. I have assumed, as I hope, that in this hall we are all convinced that Free Trade is not only not a failure, but that it has been successful beyond our expectation. I will endeavour to give some proof of that by-and-bye. What I now say is this—that to talk of this question as a question that can be disposed of by merely taxing foreign manufactures is a thing, in my opinion, perfectly ludicrous; but at any rate it is a subject upon which people ought to have an opinion. We have an opinion upon all questions vitally touching us personally or our national existence. This is a matter that vitally touches national

existence, and British citizens, accustomed to an open and free political atmosphere, should know their own minds about it, and those who lead British citizens should, above all others, know their minds about it. I have endeavoured to tell you, I hope pretty intelligibly, my mind about it. I will be no party to unsettling, at its top or at its bottom, one single stone of that noble structure which was reared by the combined efforts of many able men, most of all, perhaps, by those of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright; for which many of us have laboured, for which many of us have suffered, by which the land has prospered, and to which the people of this country have given their solemn and final adhesion.

AUTHORISED EDITION.

II.

IRELAND.

SPEECH

DELIVERED BY THE

RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE,

AT THE BANQUET

Given in the Hall, in the Old Cloth Hall at Leeds,

ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7TH, 1881,

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

As my occupations have not permitted me to correct the report of this speech, it has been kindly revised by a friend. The same office was performed on my behalf with regard to my speeches in Midlothian by my friend, Mr. C. Parker, M.P.—W. E. G.

IRELAND.

Mr. Gladstone said: Mr. Kitson, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I feel as you have felt, Sir, the difficulty of addressing the vast assembly gathered within these walls. I know not whether increasing years may have diminished my power of carrying the utterances of my mouth and of my heart to the hearts of my fellow-countrymen; but I shall indeed grieve if on this occasion, among all which I have ever had to meet, I should fail in enabling you to listen to and to catch the words which I shall address to you. My first words must be those of cordial and respectful gratitude to the Chairman, who has been chosen by your favour to the headship of your great party, and who has invited me and has brought me amongst you; and who, while apologising for defective description of my political life, in his warm and genuine attachment has gone far beyond any claims that I could, on the ground of justice, have the right to profit by such a description. Gentlemen, allow me to say that in one respect I fear—and that respect purely personal—my visit to Leeds has been a failure. I came here for the purpose of paying an old debt, and such is the reception that you have given me in your streets, in the Town Hall to-day, and now within these walls, that I painfully feel, instead of getting rid of my old debt I have only succeeded in contracting a new one. I am afraid, gentlemen, that I have no other resource than one which I trust will never be required to be made available for any of you, and that is making a piteous appeal to the indulgence of my creditors.

Gentlemen, among the pleasurable embarrassments of this visit has been the abundance with which the various associations and bodies that I have had to meet have made known to me their views on the subjects of interest that now attract the attention of the country—pleasurable as a

mark of their confidence, very mixed as regards the state of many of those matters in which you naturally feel so deep an interest. There was one of those subjects largely mentioned to-day, and now again briefly alluded to in the address of your Chairman, and I think I shall best discharge my duty to-night by addressing to you my own most earnest reflections—I mean the subject described by him in the emphatic phrase of "Justice to Ireland"—a great and sacred duty, and one that can never be performed, never justly pursued, without equal justice to England and Scotland. This morning, ladies and gentlemen, I addressed to you in another place a speech turning largely upon questions connected with the politics of our rival parties. This evening I must ask your attention with me to great, even solemn, considerations more connected with matters which are in the highest sense national. The question of the state of Ireland is not, and should not be, a party question. I am afraid that for one moment I must refer to a point of party policy and discipline—it shall be for a moment only.

You are aware that the party opposite to ours has glorified itself within the last few weeks on its victory in the county of Durham. Let it enjoy all the satisfaction which calm reflection will permit to patriotic citizens in respect to the victory so gained; but, for my part, I desire no such victories. And I trust that never will it happen that a member of the Liberal party, with such a state of things in Ireland, shall go to his constituents, and meeting the wishes of a few Irish voters who may turn the scale, shall solemnly promise to take out of the hands of the executive Government their chief responsibility, by binding himself, irrespective of all considerations, to vote for the unconditional release of every man whom the responsible Ministers of the Crown, acting on the authority that Parliament has given them, deem it necessary for the peace of the country and for public order to confine. Not another word, sir, will it be necessary for me to say which has relation to our party divisions; but I could not pass by the subject to which I have just made a brief and a painful reference.

I have been challenged by the leader of the Conservative party to speak openly and explicitly on the subject of Ireland, and I will meet the challenge. Sir Stafford Northcote had indeed been anticipated by a person acting with a different view, by one whom I am glad to call, from his mature convictions, one of the brightest ornaments of the Liberal party. I mean Lord Derby. Lord Derby, in a recent essay on the Land Act lately passed, has declared, and, in my opinion, has justly declared, that the passing of the Land Act imposes upon the Government new and special obligations with reference to the enforcement of the law and the maintenance of those rights of property and of the public peace which are inseparable from the first idea of freedom, and without which no nation is either worthy to possess freedom or capable of enjoying its blessings. Now, ladies and gentlemen, Ireland is in a great crisis. A few weeks hang over her which, in ancient times, would have been called fateful weeks. The Land Act, which has hitherto been mere writing upon paper, is about to become a living reality; and upon the reception and working of the Land Act may depend for generations, perhaps for centuries, the condition of Ireland, its happiness and prosperity, or its loss of all rational hopes of progress. I know not what the issue of that crisis is to be, but interested as you are in Irish affairs, and inseparably associated as are these three countries, I will venture to lay before you such considerations as, I think, fairly describe the character of the Irish crisis.

Gentlemen, you have been, your party has been, for several generations of men, distinguished for its anxiety to promote the redress of Irish grievances, and you know that you are constantly reproached with what is called the failure of your efforts. And far be it from me to say that their success has been complete. But this I will say, that in my mind the man is a coward who despairs of the fate of Ireland. Amongst the scenes that are now, unhappily, being enacted there by certain persons, we may lose sight of the great and unquestionable progress that has been achieved by that country. It has achieved material progress in a degree most remarkable for a country with

little variety of pursuit. I do not believe that there is a labouring population in all Europe—although the condition of the Irish labourer still leaves much to desire—which, in the course of the last 20 years, has made a progress equal to that of the labouring population of Ireland. Let me look at the farming class, which, as you know, may be said almost to constitute the body of the nation, understood as the term is understood in Ireland. Let me look at the indication of their surplus wealth. Forty years ago the deposits in the Irish banks, which are the indication of the amount of their free savings, were about five millions. Some 15 years later than that I think they had risen to some 11 or 12 millions. There are now of deposits in the Irish banks, which represent almost wholly the honest earnings and savings of Irish farmers, a sum of nearly 30 millions of money. Of course, I don't mean to say that the whole of these are agricultural savings, but an enormous proportion is of agricultural savings, and at any rate you cannot mistake the meaning and the force of the comparison between the 30 millions in round numbers of the present day and the five millions which were in the Irish banks 40 years ago. If I am to speak of moral progress in Ireland, I say that it has been remarkable, and it is associated with legal progress in regard to every class of legal offences but one. There is still one painful and grievous exception—the exception of agrarian offences. But, gentlemen, you will freely rejoice when I record this fact, that whereas 40 and 50 years ago—50 years ago, I will say—the whole of the community was a community adverse to the execution of law, and while I think there were then some 14,000 offenders annually committed, the law is now, except as to agrarian offences, as well executed in Ireland as it is in England, and the numbers recorded in our statistical comparisons of criminal offenders have fallen from 14,000 to 3,000. Gentlemen, these are indications of real progress about which there can be no mistake. They are encouragements to us to persevere, to fall back upon that stock of resolution and of patience by which it is that a nation grows great, and when it has grown great, keeps its greatness. We will not be daunted or baffled by

difficulties; we will spend every effort and every resource, against whatever opposition, in the acccomplishment of a great and noble work.

Now, gentlemen, with respect to the Land Act, there is a power brought into operation which I will presently endeavour to describe more particularly, and which I do not hesitate to say is a formidable power. Not only the energies of this Government but the energies of this nation will be taxed, and the energy of everything in Ireland that partakes of loyalty and sound principle will be taxed, to overcome that power, and to secure for the people of Ireland that justice in regard to the use of their land which pretended friends are endeavouring to keep away from them. Now we have many signs of encouragement in this matter. An election a few weeks ago took place in the county of Tyrone. There was a Tory candidate on the ground, and a manifesto,—couched like the manifesto in Durham, from the same quarter, in terms, I was going to say, of the most violent abuse, but at least the most unsparing abuse of the present Government,—was issued, advising the electors to take care that whatever happened a Liberal should not be returned. The great leader of the anti-British party—the anti-loyal party—failed in the purpose of that manifesto, and a Liberal was returned for the county of Tyrone. The Roman Catholic Bishops in Ireland, as you know, owing in a great degree to the unfortunate circumstances of the country, have been for many generations the habitual and the trusted advisers of the people. They have met in solemn synod, and they earnestly urged upon the people willingly and freely to accept and to make full trial of the Land Act. In some cases many persons belonging to what is termed the Land League have held the very same language, and for that reason it is that I do not like to speak to you, and shall not speak to you, of the Land League as embodying a principle hostile to order and to law in Ireland, because dangerous as that association has proved itself to be, yet I am convinced that it has many members, and perhaps many local branches, who have only had in view the attainment of lawful and reasonable objects; and whose exertions, and the credit of whose

names and characters, others are endeavouring to pervert for purposes neither lawful nor reasonable. The Land League in the county of Clare the other day met and declared that the Land Act ought to be freely and gladly accepted—accepted, of course, for the purpose of making a full, impartial trial of the operation of its provisions. I must quote to you a passage from a gentleman well-known in this country some 40 years ago as one of the extremest of Irish patriots—Sir Charles Gavan Duffy—who has since then run through an honourable and lengthened political career in one of our great Australian colonies. He has come back to his country—he has come back full of the same intensely national spirit as that with which he went away. He is not an altered man. And what does he say? He has published a pamphlet, from which I shall venture to extract the following passage. Having described the Land Act, he says :—

"Now, my friends, is not this a measure to be received and gratefully to be utilised to its utmost possibility of good? To me nothing is clearer than that all the productive energy and the generous enthusiasm of our people ought to be immediately directed to this task; that we ought to seize all the points of vantage in that Bill. If I were a bishop, I would write a pastoral: if I were a priest, I would preach a discourse; if I were a journalist, I would make myself heard from the rostrum of that profession; if I could do no better, I would beat a drum, in order to fix the attention of the Irish people on the splendid opportunity they possess to become prosperous and powerful."

That, gentlemen, is the impartial judgment pronounced upon the Land Act by Irish patriotism of the old school—Irish patriotism, for I am by no means disposed to pledge myself to all the opinions of Sir Charles respecting Ireland. For I believe almost none of us would approve, upon certain points, of that patriotism; but even the narrower and more exclusive it is, the more weight has the conclusion to which he has now arrived, and the more solemn the appeal he has made to his country. I will trouble you, gentlemen, with yet one other citation. You know that the great evil of Irish agricultural life was practical insecurity of tenure and want of confidence, amounting, in a very great degree, to the effectual discouragement of industry; and what was wanted was the removal of this insecurity of tenure, and the substitution

for it of something that would restore the confidence of the Irish people in a reasonable certainty of the possession of their holdings. Well, gentlemen, we have never professed to give, and have not sought to give, effect to any extreme doctrine upon this subject. But we have declared that there ought to be given, and have striven to give, to the Irish agriculturist, the Irish farmer and the cottage tenant, that kind of reasonable security. It is admitted that it has been given by those who know the Land Act. All those in Ireland who write upon the Land Act treat it as an Act which gives a reasonable security to the Irish tenant.

I have quoted Sir Charles Duffy. I will now quote a later form of trusted Irish patriotism. I will cite a man who, until his death, not more than some three or four years ago, was the leader of the Irish party in Parliament. I mean Mr. Isaac Butt. What, says Mr. Isaac Butt, ought to be and would be the state of things in Ireland if we would remove the great and growing evil which had even then been greatly diminished, and which has now, as is well-known been entirely removed? What was the description he gave of the state of things that would and ought to prevail in Ireland when that aim had been attained? Mr. Butt, in 1866—that was before the Land Act of 1870—Mr Butt, speaking of a measure that would give effectual security of tenure to the Irish tenant, said:—

> "Such a measure would obliterate the traces of the ascendancy of conquest; it would teach the population of Ireland to regard the institutions connected with landed property with a friendly instead of a hostile feeling. It would conciliate them to the law, which they now regard as their enemy, because they know it chiefly as enforcing landlords' rights. Take the great body of the people into partnership with proprietary privileges, and you do more to attach them to the law **or** the constitution than you could effect by all the political or religious concessions you could make. Other questions engage their feelings or their passions; the land question touches their very existence and their life."

Well, ladies and gentlemen, if this be so, you may suppose that we ought to have at last quiet times in Ireland. And now let me do justice to a gentleman whose name is in Ireland respected amongst those who differ most widely from him, and who was lately, under the exercise of the

discretion of the Government, confined in prison—Mr. Dillon, the Member for Tipperary. Mr. Dillon is a man of the most extreme opinions upon every question connected with the nationality of Ireland. I am not going to recommend the adoption of his opinions, or to profess any share of sympathy with them ; but I am going to point out to you, first of all, that he is a man whom every one acknowledges to be one of most single-minded attachment, devoted attachment, to his country, and to be of a perfect, unswerving integrity. Now, gentlemen, suppose you were like Mr. Dillon, that you believed Ireland was entitled to a complete independent national existence —which, I think, is what he believes—and supposing, while you were prosecuting that end, you found a measure passed by what they call, some of them, an alien Parliament, granting, with a liberality unknown in the history of landed legislation, privilege and security to the cultivator of the soil, what would you do ? Would you, in consequence of your ulterior views, reject that boon ? Would you keep men in want who might be in abundance ? Would you keep men in insecurity who might enjoy a stable confidence? Would you keep men in a condition of uncertainty as to the future provision for their families, when they might have these means at their command, on account of your ulterior views ? No ; you would not. You would say you were not justified in intercepting the beneficial action of a measure like the Land Act. And that is what Mr. Dillon—alone, I am sorry to say, among his friends—has done. He has withdrawn himself from the theatre of action in Ireland. He will not give up his extreme national views, but neither will he take upon himself the fearful responsibility of attempting to plunge that country into permanent disorder and chaos by intercepting the operation of the Land Act. I claim Mr. Dillon as an opponent, but as an opponent whom I am glad to honour.*

*" Some of them might remember that in the very beginning he held a very strong view on that point, namely, that the passing of the Land Act would immensely increase the difficulty, if not render it impossible for them to carry on the League ; and in a speech which he made immediately after

Now, gentlemen, I have the painful duty of dealing with very different conduct. For nearly the first time in the history of Christendom, a body—a small body—of men have arisen who are not ashamed to preach in Ireland the doctrines of public plunder. I make that charge

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Mr. Gladstone introduced the measure, he expressed that fear. He believed if the Bill passed into law, and more especially if it passed into law tolerated or countenanced by the League, it would in a few months take all the power out of the League. That was his deliberate conviction after studying the Bill, and although some modifications had been introduced—and he was free to admit, some of them slightly in favour of the people—still no change had been made that would induce him to alter one single sentence of what he then said. He said then—he hoped it would be proved he was wrong in that opinion—and he repeated it now, if men thought that they could pursue the policy of trying the Land Act, and taking from it all the benefits they could—and he was the last man to deny there were benefits in the Bill—but if they thought they could take the Bill, and yet not weaken the arm of the League, and not weaken the revolutionary policy of the League—and if they proved to be right, God knew that there would not be an Irishman more glad than he would be at the result. He knew the difficulty experienced in getting the people to stand erect before their masters, and he knew how slowly this movement grew in the beginning. . . . . His fear was that the yoke of landlord ascendancy being made lighter, much lighter, as it probably would be—and he wished it to be distinctly understood that he never said this Bill would not confer immense benefits on the Irish people, benefits which their fathers in 1852 would have thought invaluable, and would have thanked their oppressors for having given; but thank God, they stood now in different times. His fear was that the yoke of landlord ascendancy might be made lighter by this Bill, and that the people of Ireland would once more bow their heads beneath it, and consent again to live as slaves and as serfs under toleration. Up to the time of his arrest, therefore, he did his best to rouse the people to the true question, and to secure that the Bill would be rejected by a solemn convention, at which the people would solemnly agree not to use the Bill in any form, and to enter into a solemn agreement that the man who did use it would be a traitor to the national cause. . . . . He was of opinion that even if it was desirable for the League to attempt to prevent the people trying the Act, it would be found impossible. It would be impossible for him to be a party to such a policy, and the only course, therefore, for him was to retire from public life for some months, and leave those who believed in this policy unembarrassed to carry it out."—Speech delivered by Mr. Dillon in Dublin, on the 29th August, 1881.

There is some reason to suppose that I have interpreted too favourably the action of Mr. Dillon. The speech here cited may certainly mean, not, as I had hoped, that the Irish people were to be permitted to use the Act, but that all use of it ought at once to be denounced and forbidden; in lieu of the more circuitous and astute method apparently preferred by Mr. Parnell—that, namely, of submitting demands to the Commissioners through the medium of "test cases," which it would be impossible for them to agree to, and then of condemning the Act upon the rejection of these demands.—W. E. G.

advisedly in the situation which I hold, and I shall ask you to judge with me whether it is not wrung from me by demonstrative evidence and by the hard necessity of the case. Gentlemen, half a century ago the people of Ireland gave their confidence to Mr. O'Connell, a man of remarkable powers and of opinions not always acceptable to the people of this country. But he was a man with respect to whom it must be said that he had these five characteristics: he always declared his loyalty to the Crown; he always declared his desire for friendly relations with Great Britain; he always declared his respect for property—and he never, so far as I know, by word or act went in contravention of it; he declared his respect for law and human life, and said that no political change—which was a strong thing to say—should be prosecuted at the hazard of its being bought by the shedding of a drop of human blood; and, finally, O'Connell always availed himself of and promoted every measure—whether it were small or great, and however far it might fall short of his views — which tended to promote the happiness of the people of Ireland. That, gentlemen, was the political education of the people of Ireland half a century ago. I must now describe to you, briefly, upon these five points, the political education which they are now receiving. And, gentlemen, the consideration which oppresses me and almost weighs me to the ground at this moment is this, that within a few short weeks—certainly within a few short months—it may have to be decided which of these two forms of political education the people of Ireland will prefer. I take as a representative of the opinions I denounce the name of a gentleman of considerable ability—Mr. Parnell, the Member for Cork—a gentleman, I will admit, of considerable ability, but whose doctrines are not such as really need any considerable ability to recommend them. If you go forth upon a mission to demoralise a people by teaching them to make the property of their neighbours the objects of their covetous desire, it does not require superhuman gifts to find a certain number of followers and adherents for a doctrine such as that.

Do not let it be supposed, gentlemen, that I am going to describe what is sometimes called the Irish party and sometimes called the Home Rule party, or to charge upon that party the doctrines of which I now speak. The majority of Irish Members are nominally Home Rulers; but of those nominal Home Rulers no inconsiderable portion—such, for instance, as my respected friend, Mr. Shaw—are men of political association with whom no one of us Liberals ought for a moment to be ashamed. Even of those who won't recognise Mr. Shaw there are many who reject in their inmost souls these doctrines, who have not either the power, or perhaps the courage, to repel as completely as they ought to repel the men who teach what I am going to describe, but who undoubtedly follow with a slow and reluctant pace, and take every opportunity they can to shew that reluctance. A handful of men, and only a handful, in Parliament follow Mr. Parnell. I will not call them a party, for they are not entitled to be called a party; but they are gentlemen who make themselves effectively responsible for the new gospel of Irish patriotism. And even with respect to them so hard it is to understand how far it may be with them a matter of compulsion and how far a matter of will, that I will not attempt to identify them. I will frankly take the case of Mr. Parnell, as exhibiting to you what I mean when I say that the state of things in Ireland is coming to be a question between law on the one hand and sheer lawlessness on the other.

And now, gentlemen, I shall go very briefly—and the importance of the subject, I am sure, will justify me in your eyes if I detain you longer—I shall go very briefly over the five points of Irish patriotism as it was known in the time of O'Connell, and as it is now being made known in a very different shape. Mr. O'Connell professed his unconditional and unswerving loyalty to the Crown of England. Mr. Parnell says if the Crown of England is to be the link between the two countries, it must be the only link; but whether it is to be the link at all—I am not now quoting his words—is a matter on which I believe he has given no opinion whatever. O'Connell desired friendly relations

with the people of this country—cordial and hearty friendship. What does Mr. Parnell desire? He says the Irish people must make manufactures of their own, in order that they may buy nothing in England. I do not believe him to be a profound political economist, but I would commend to his mind the consideration that it may be rather difficult for the Irish people to provide themselves, by the labour of their own hands, with everything that they now derive from England. He is prepared for that alternative, and he says, "If you cannot make the manufactured article, you must buy them from foreign countries; but whatever you do, you must not buy them from England." I say gentlemen, that I think you will begin to perceive that in the strong language I have used to describe the condition of affairs in Ireland, I am not wholly without justification. Friendship with England was the motto of O'Connell, who, on every occasion, declared his respect for property —and, as far as I know, I believe he consistently maintained it; but what says Mr. Parnell upon that subject? Twelve months ago he told the people of Ireland that they ought to pay, not the rents they had covenanted to pay, but the estimate of Griffith's valuation, which is much below the real value, and in by far the greater number of cases is framed for a different purpose. In fact, the advice amounted to this—that the tenantry were to substitute an arbitrary payment for the standard which had been agreed upon. But Mr. Parnell has not stopped there. Now that the Land Act has passed, and now that he is afraid lest the people of England by their long-continued efforts should win the heart of the whole Irish nation, Mr. Parnell has a new and an enlarged gospel of plunder to proclaim. He says now that, whereas the rental of Ireland is 17 millions of money, the landlord is entitled to nothing but the original value of the land before the spade was put into it; and that the rental he may justly claim is not 17 millions, but possibly about three millions of money. And I ask you, gentlemen, as honest men, not as politicians, not as Liberals, not in any other capacity—I ask you whether it is possible to describe proceedings of that kind in any

words more just or accurate than as the promulgation of the gospel of sheer plunder.

The next of the five points was respect for law and human life. On that I think O'Connell was consistent; and I believe he was unimpeachable. Mr. Parnell is somewhat copious in his references to America. He seems to set up America as the true and only friend of Ireland; but in all his references to America he has never found time to utter one word of disapproval or misgiving about what is known as the assassination literature of that country. Not American literature. No; there is not an American who does not scorn it and spurn it and loathe it as you do. But there are, it is sad to say, a knot of Irishmen who are not ashamed to point out, in the press which they maintain, how the ships of Her Majesty's navy ought to be blown into the air—to destroy the power of England by secret treachery, and how gentlemen that they are pleased to select ought to be made the object of the knife of the assassin, and deprived of life because they don't conform to the new Irish gospel. You know there have been some attempts of this kind made in this country. You may have heard of an explosion of dynamite in Salford not very long ago. There was a death of one person in consequence of that explosion. The death of another was expected, but I believe was averted; and Mr. Parnell said that that occurrence in Salford appeared to him to bear the character of a practical joke.

Now, gentlemen, I go along point by point, and I come finally to this, that whenever a measure was passed with a good intent for Ireland, O'Connell accepted that measure, however far short it might fall of what he thought she was entitled to claim. Has the present candidate for the leadership—for I will not call him leader of the people of Ireland; that is just the question that has got to be decided, and is not decided yet—has the candidate for the leadership of the people acted upon that principle? How has he met us during the last Session? With every effort that he could to disparage, to discredit, and, if he could, to destroy the Land Bill. He did not dare to go beyond a certain point. He did not dare to vote against the Bill

like a man, because he knew that if he did his own Land Leaguers in Ireland would rise in a body against him. But when the Tories, unfortunately as I think, determined to oppose the Bill on the second reading, and when the life, of the Bill was at stake, Mr. Parnell, with 30 of his friends, withdrew from the House, and did the utmost that their courage permitted to destroy the work which we had begun, and to defeat us in our arduous labours. On every occasion the same policy was pursued ; and now what does Mr. Parnell do? The people of Ireland, gentlemen, as we believe—and this is just the matter that the next few weeks or months will have to determine—desire, in conformity with the advice of their old patriots, of their Bishops, of their trusted friends, to make a full trial of the Land Act ; and if they do make a full trial of that Act, you may rely upon it—it is as certain as human contingencies can be—it will give peace to the country. Peace to the country is exactly the thing which is not the object of Mr. Parnell and his disciples; and therefore, in the prosecution of their policy, the thing which is more than all necessary for them to do is to intercept the action of the Land Act. How do they set about it? Mr. Parnell, with his myrmidons around him in his Land League, goes to Dublin, instructs the people of Ireland that they are not to go into the Court which the Parliament of the country has established in order to do them justice—they are not to go into the Court until he gives them leave. He says that they are not to go there until he has framed certain test cases, and until he and his brethren of the Land League have taken these test cases into Court.

What does he mean by these test cases? I will tell you, gentlemen, what he means. It is perfectly plain. He means to take into Court cases of rents which are fair and moderate rents. A court is established to administer equal justice and not to obey the behests of Mr. Parnell. If Mr. Parnell, in the name of test cases, carries before the Court moderate and fair rents—of which there are many in Ireland—the Court will reject the application, and when the Court has rejected the application Mr. Parnell and his train will then tell the Irish people they have been

betrayed, that the Court is worthless, and that the Land Act ought to meet with their unequivocal denunciation. So he will play his game, and so he will gain his object, if the people of Ireland should listen to his advice. Because, gentlemen, you know as well as I do, that the Parliament of this country is not going to overturn the principles of public order to please any party. And I think you also know that the people of this country in any such question relating to the government of a portion of the Queen's territory, weak as they may be if their cause is unjust, in a just cause are invincible. I am not in any one of these cases speaking except in the strictest accord with what Mr. Parnell has promulgated as his new creed of Irish patriotism; and I see that among the last of his declarations he has said, "We propose"—you will observe these words—"we propose to test the Land Act, not to use it." Well, but the fair test of an Act is to use it. To use it is what Gavan Duffy so earnestly advises; to use it is what Mr. Dillon would permit;* to use it is what the Bishops recommend. "No, you must not use it, says Mr. Parnell; "you must test it"—that is to say, you must apply to it a test which will bring to light the disposition of the Court upon the doctrine that has now been promulgated—that the land rental of Ireland, which is stated at 17 millions, is to be reduced to three millions to satisfy the just claims of the people.

Now, gentlemen, I think I am not wrong in stating that this is a case of the utmost gravity. I have spoken very strongly, but I have carefully striven to avoid exaggeration, and I am prepared to be tried upon each and every word that I have used. There is another misfortune of Ireland besides the fact that for the first time in our history these immoral and degrading doctrines are taught by men of education, and men of responsible station, to their social inferiors. And the other unhappy fact is the traditional sluggishness and incapacity of the healthier portions of society in Ireland to do anything whatever for themselves. Why, gentlemen, what would happen in this country if schemes of this kind were to go forth and to

* See foot note at p. 10.

become in any degree dangerous to the public peace, and to shew their first fruits in the prevalence of agrarian crime, sometimes accompanied with horrible and disgraceful cruelty, even with loss of life, and if the putting down of that crime through the combination by which it was supported proved to be beyond the utmost exertions of the paid officers of the law? Why, what would happen would be this—that vast multitudes of loyal citizens would array themselves in support and in aid of the officers of the law. But no such thing is heard of, unhappily, in Ireland. I hope there will be a change in that respect. I am sure it is necessary.

I will give you yet one more brief quotation from a friend whom I need not name, but who writes thus upon the condition of Ireland :—

"What is amazing and discouraging is that during the past 18 months no Irishman in Ireland has lifted up his voice to win his countrymen or to condemn the rebel faction led by Mr. Parnell; that there has been no meeting of any importance, no movement of any kind, no expression of opinion in support of public law and public order. The upper classes—the landowners—are silent or are refugees, and their power is gone. There is no middle-class there, as there is in England, to step forward to sustain the Government and denounce evil. A general cowardice seems to prevail among all classes who possess property, and Government is expected to preserve peace with no moral force behind it."

That, gentlemen, is the great scandal and evil of Ireland, and until that evil also is removed the condition of Ireland will not be thoroughly sound or healthy.

I am glad to see, gentlemen, opposite my eye the name of Mr. Forster, and I am further glad that my reference to that name has been the means of evoking this testimony [the audience had cheered the reference to Mr. Forster] of your admiration and confidence in him. Amidst difficulties which rarely have been equalled, and with the recollection of splendid services personally rendered to the people of Ireland from pure, disinterested, individual philanthropy in the early days of his youth, Mr. Forster represents in Ireland that cause which I hope will triumph. I hope, gentlemen, it will triumph. I have not lost confidence in the people of Ireland. The progress they have made in many points, some of which I recounted to you, is to me a proof that we ought

to rely upon them. But they have dangers and temptations and seductions offered to them such as never were before presented to a people, and the trial of their virtue is severe But, nevertheless, they will have to go through that trial. We have endeavoured to pay to them the debt of justice, and of liberal justice. We have no reason to believe they do not acknowledge it. We wish that they may have the courage to acknowledge it manfully and openly, and to repudiate, as they ought to repudiate, the evil counsels with which it is sought to seduce them from the path of duty and of right, as well as of public law and of public order. We are convinced that the Irish nation desire to take free and full advantage of the Land Act. But Mr. Parnell says: "No, you must wait until I have submitted cases; until I tell you whether the Court that Parliament has established can be trusted." Trusted for what? Trusted to reduce what he says is 17 millions a year of property to the three millions which he graciously allows. And when he finds it is not to be trusted for that—and I hope in God, gentlemen, it is not to be trusted for any such purpose—then he will endeavour further to work his will by attempting to procure for the Irish people the repeal of the Act. But in the meantime what says he? That unti he has submitted his test cases any farmer who pays his rent is a fool—a dangerous denunciation in Ireland, gentlemen—a dangerous thing to be denounced as a fool by the head, by a man who has made himself the head of the most violent party in Ireland, and who has offered the greatest temptations to the Irish people. That is no small matter. He desires, gentlemen, to arrest the operation of the Act —to stand, as Aaron stood, between the living and the dead; but to stand there, not as Aaron stood to arrest, but to spread the plague.

These opinions, gentlemen, are called forth by the grave state of the facts; I do not give them to you as anything more, but they are opinions sustained by reference to words and to actions; they all have regard to this great impending crisis in which we depend upon the good sense of the people, and in which we are determined that no force and no fear of force, and no fear of ruin through force, shall, so far

as we are concerned, and as it is in our power to decide the question, prevent the Irish people from having the full and the free benefit of the Land Act. But if, when we have that short further experience to which I have referred, it shall then appear that there is still to be fought a final conflict in Ireland, between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness upon the other ; if the law, purged from defect and from any taint of injustice, is still to be repelled and refused, and the first conditions of political society are to be set at nought, then I say, gentlemen, without hesitation, the resources of civilisation against its enemies are not yet exhausted. I shall recognise in full, when the facts are ripe—and their ripeness is approaching—the duty and the responsibility of the Government. I call upon all orders and degrees of men, not in these two kingdoms, but in these three, to support the Government in the discharge of its duty and in acquitting itself of that responsibility. I, for one, in that state of facts, relying upon my fellow-countrymen in these three nations associated together, have not a doubt of the result.

AUTHORISED EDITION.

III.

FREE TRADE.

SPEECH

DELIVERED BY THE

RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE,

In the Civil Court of the Town Hall in Leeds,

In reply to the Address presented by the Chamber of Commerce,

ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8TH, 1881,

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

As my occupations have not permitted me to correct the report of this speech, it has been kindly revised by a friend. The same office was performed on my behalf with regard to my speeches in Midlothian by my friend, Mr. C. Parker, M.P.—W. E. G.

FREE TRADE.

Mr. Gladstone said: Mr. Kitson and Gentlemen,—I am very sensible of the great honour which you have done me to-day in presenting me with this address. It contains, in short compass, allusions to many points of the greatest importance. So far as those embrace the legislative action of the Government, I need not, I think, assure you of our great anxiety to make progress in the direction, and generally in the manner that you desire; but it is only right that I should call your attention—and, indeed, I must take every opportunity that presents itself of calling the attention of the public at large—to the very serious obstacles that now impede the progress of business in the House of Commons, and to assure you that for the sake of every interest, and for the sake of every measure, it has become a matter of vital importance to consider in what way that great and noble legislative instrument, the House of Commons—itself the noblest legislative instrument in the world—can be restored to that efficiency which it once possessed, if possible even with an extension and increase of that efficiency. Because, gentlemen, experience has proved that with the progress of time and with the great accumulation of legislative labours of which this century has been the witness, instead of clearing off the call upon us for fresh exertion, the developing wants of an enlarged society continually augment the long catalogue of our arrears, and if we are to deal with them seriously it must be not only by approaching each of them with the instrumental power we now possess, but by attempting some great and effectual improvement in the rules for working the instrument itself

There is, however, one of these questions to which I will particularly refer—the question of the French Treaty now under negotiation—though adjourned negotiation, still under negotiation—with the Commissioners in France. I will not anticipate the results of that negotiation. It would be premature. But as to the basis on which the negotiation is conducted you may rely upon it that we are

in no doubt or difficulty. We think that we understand the general sentiment of the British public—the commercial public—upon the subject, and our own opinions are in conformity with that sentiment. I, for my part, look back with the deepest interest upon the share that I had in concluding—at least I will not say so much in concluding—but in conducting on this side of the water, and within the walls of Parliament as well as in administration, the proceedings which led to that memorable French Treaty of 1860. It is quite true that that treaty did not produce the whole of the effects that some too sanguine anticipations may possibly have expected from it—that it did not produce a universal smash of protective duties as I wish it had throughout the civilised world. But it did something. It enormously increased the trade between this country and France. It knit more closely than they had ever been knit before the sentiments of goodwill between this country and France. It effectually checked and traversed in the year 1860 tendencies of a very different kind towards needless alarms and panics and tendencies towards convulsion and confusion in Europe. There was no more powerful instrument for confining and controlling those wayward and angry spirits, at that particular crisis, than the Commercial Treaty with France. It produced no inconsiderable effect for a number of years upon the legislation of various European countries, which tended less decisively than we could have desired, but still intelligibly and beneficially, in the direction of freedom of trade.

There has been of late a reaction, as we know, in various countries. The political economy of Germany walks in a direction adverse to ours. But as I have said, and I do not hesitate to repeat it to you, when we observe what notions are abroad in our country, what doctrines are held, what specifics are recommended for the purpose of recovering trade from its partial contraction—I won't say decay, for decayed it has not—but from its partial contraction, I think we cannot very much wonder if the same errors have scope and go abroad in other countries and have more influence on the legislation of other countries than, after our large and rich experience, they are likely to have in ours. For although, as this is not a political

assembly, I have not the slightest intention to make a political speech to you, yet I may say that I express the firmest and strongest conviction that no Government that can exist in this country will either soon or late pledge its responsibility to any proposals for restoring protective duties. You might as well attempt to overthrow any institution of the country as to overthrow the Free Trade legislation. It is not in vain that a country of this kind, with the opportunities that, thank God, we possess for free deliberation, devotes a quarter of a century of its life towards breaking down its ancient and complicated tariff and making its trade free to all the world. We are not in the habit of undoing our great legislative acts. Foreign observers of the proceedings of this country find much to criticise, find something to admire, and one of the subjects which they select for admiration is this, that progress in this country, if it be not always rapid, yet is always sure, and that when we have made steps in advance we do not follow them by undoing our own labour and making steps in retreat. And therefore, gentlemen, as regards this legislation, you might as well attempt to overthrow trial by jury ; you might as well attempt to overthrow the right of petition or of public meeting ; you might as well attempt to tear out of our social and political system any one of the most cherished ideas that Englishmen have inherited from centuries of history, as to overset the Free Trade legislation. Do not suppose that on that account it is my opinion that the strange theories that have now for a moment lifted their heads from their native obscurity into light are matters of small importance, or will do no mischief.

I have spoken on this subject in another place. They may become the subject matter of very serious conflict between parties; they may create and propagate delusion in various quarters and places of the country ; they may be made use of for this or that particular view ; they may influence this or that election ; they may lead to great waste of time, and to a good deal of confusion in the relations of party and politics—all these are evils which I hope we shall be able to obviate and to keep down. But I wish to point out to you that at least, in my firm conviction, there is a limit to these evils, and that the great legislation which

marked the lifetime of Sir Robert Peel, of Mr. Cobden, and with which the name of Mr. Bright is inseparably connected —is, in my opinion, resting upon such foundations that nothing can shake it, and that the speeches, and the articles, and the treatises that are now floating about in the atmosphere pass as the wind around the solid structure within whose walls we stand, and have no more effect than the idle breeze has upon the stones of this solid structure.

I ought to say one word more before I pass from this subject. I must say a word upon the subject of the Commercial Treaty with France. I read with great interest the remarks of Sir Stafford Northcote on this subject, and I am bound to say that I think they state the case very fairly. It is a balance of the considerations which we had to take into view. There are great disadvantages attaching to all commercial treaties, and the most serious disadvantage of them all is this, that there is a great tendency—when you are only suggesting to people that they should do what is good for themselves—there is a great tendency to assume the position of requesting them to do something simply because it is good for you. There is a tendency to misrepresent and dislocate, if I may say so, the true idea of commerce, which rests and is founded upon this principle —that in the operations of commerce it is absolutely, impossible for a country to do good to itself without at the same time doing good to other people. You may depend upon this, gentlemen—I cannot undertake at this moment to say, though we have good hopes—I will not undertake at this moment to say whether we shall have a treaty with France or not ; but upon this you may rely, that much as we value association with France, great as is the political value of a well-concluded commercial negotiation, we do not think it our duty, nor within the limits of our rights to purchase that political advantage by a sacrifice of the true principles of our commercial relations ; and if you have a treaty with France, you may depend upon it that it shall not be, with our assent, taking it all in all, a treaty of retrogression either small or great.

I will not say many words to you about myself. Although I spring from a commercial family, yet when I entered Parliament it was not for a good many years that

my mind was turned to economical subjects; in truth, it was not until 1841, when, on the proposal of Sir Robert Peel, I accepted the office of Vice-President of the Board of Trade. At that period the Board of Trade was the Department which administered to a great extent the functions, which have since then passed principally into the hands of the Treasury, connected with the fiscal laws of the country. I had inherited, as nearly the whole Conservative party had, and likewise, as you know, no inconsiderable portion of the Liberal party down to that period had inherited, the ideas and traditions of Protection. But when it became my duty in the Board of Trade to apply myself, with the energies of youth which I then possessed, to the consideration of those subjects, I need not say that I found those traditions crumble away rapidly under my feet, and before I had been there 12 months my name had become a by-word, and was quoted in Protectionist assemblies as that of a man who was not to be trusted. It was quite true, gentlemen. Moreover, they found out about the same time that Sir Robert Peel could not be trusted, and not only that, but as we got older and older, and lived on from year to year, the matter got worse and worse, and we became still less worthy of the public confidence on the ground of maintaining any system of Protection. Well, now, gentlemen, as we are in an assembly of no vast numbers, although of great influence and power, and as we are not met upon political or party grounds, just let me call your attention for a few minutes to a subject which I purposely omitted yesterday in my address in a larger room. The main proposition is capable of being considered with the utmost calmness and coolness—whether we have been right, after all, in what we have been doing, or whether a great delusion has passed upon us. And I do this not for your sakes, or for my own, but for the sake of weaker brethren—if I may so venture to call them—who really have, in certain cases and in various classes of the community, embraced, and I have no doubt in perfect good faith, the belief that we have been acting under a delusion, and that Free Trade has been an error and a failure. Fortunately, it does not require to be discussed at any great length, and I think I can go through it without making any outrageous claim upon your patience.

I take the date of 1840 as that of the last year in which the protective system enjoyed perfect peace. In every year after that it was subject to a series of discussions and disturbances, which, in the first place, produced the most grievous effects upon its health; and in the second led to its utter downfall. But before 1840 what was the condition of the country? If I regard the condition of this country as to wealth, I find that between the beginning of the century and 1840 there was a very large increase of the population, owing to causes partly healthful and partly otherwise, but the wealth of the country increased in a less proportion than the population; and what was much more important was this, it increased in the hands of the class already possessed of wealth, but no share of this increase went to the mass of the people. I am afraid I am correct in saying that if we take the mass of our agricultural population in particular, the history of these years was a history of going from bad to worse, a history of increasing social degradation, a history of absolute want in various degrees, and in many or most of the counties in this country, of the means of decent lodging, decent clothing, and sufficient feeding, until that great Act, one of the wisest and most important of modern legislation, the new Poor Law Act, was passed in 1834, and with slow and sure operation began to check the more grievous forms of certain mischiefs, but of course without the power of being able to supply the new vital energies which had to be sought in other quarters. That, generally speaking, was our material condition. And what was our moral condition? I well remember on the first occasion of my entering Parliament how we heard from well-intentioned men the sorest and the most just lamentations over the increase of crime under the blessed influence of Protection, and a well-informed author quotes the numbers thus for the crimes committed in England and taken notice of by public justice: that in 1809 they had been 5,350; in 1818 they had swollen, after the Peace, and with the special causes of distress that the Peace and that the unhappy Corn Law brought with them, they had swollen to 14,254; and in 1829 they rose to 18,675. That, gentlemen, I give you as an indication of the moral influences attaching to the system

of Protection, because I warn and entreat you never to be content to argue the question of free commerce as if it were a material question alone. It is just as strong in its political, in its social, and in its moral aspects as it is in its operation upon the production and increase of wealth.

That is all I will say to you on the state of things before 1840. Now, let me consider what has happened since 1840. In 1841 the population of this country—the three kingdoms—was twenty-six and a-half millions. In 1881 the population had increased to 35 millions; the increase was eight and a-half millions, or very nearly, and closely enough for my present purpose, an increase of 33 per cent. Now, I want to compare, first with the increased population the increase of wealth, and though I shall resort to the Income-tax in the first place for this purpose, I shall do it safely, because we all know that, while the wealthy classes have been growing wealthier, the poorer classes have likewise been gradually emerging from their indigence, and that freedom of commerce has showered its benefits over them, speaking generally, with no less liberality and no less efficiency than over the capitalists of this country. The increase of wages in this country has borne, if not a full proportion, yet some proportion, to the increase of capital, and has formed a solid addition to the comforts of the people, such as, at any rate, whether sufficient or not—and of that I need not speak—is without example in our prior history. Let me look at the progress of wealth as shewn by the Income-tax. The income taxable to the Income-tax in 1842 was 251 millions; in 1880 it was 542 millions. I don't include Ireland in the return. Very large amounts of income had in the meantime, whether wisely or unwisely—and I need not enter on that subject now—been either wholly or partially excluded, and I think that the tax may have lost as much as 40 millions of taxable income in that way. That would make £582,000,000 to compare with £251,000,000. The result of that is, that while the population of the country had grown 33 per cent. the wealth of the country, instead of growing as it had done before at a rate slower than the population, had increased, and, tested by the Income-tax, at the rate of 130 per cent.; and if we were able to exhibit the mass of the income of labour, it is probable that it would have exhibited

a growth hardly, if at all, less remarkable. The trade of the country increased by the exports of British produce; and in this increase of exports I need not say the working people have a share perhaps as important even as the capitalist. Where in 1840 they were £51,000,000, in 1880 they were £223,000,000; so that while the population of the country had grown 33 per cent., the export trade of the country had grown at the rate of 340 per cent. As to the savings of the mass of the population—I only quote this as a partial fact of interest, for we have unfortunately no effectual means of exhibiting the subject completely—the savings deposited in savings banks, which had been £24,500,000 in 1840 were £75,500,000 in 1880; and undoubtedly that £75,500,000 was far more representative of the savings of the working classes through the Post Office savings banks in 1880 than the £24,500,000 in 1840 had been representative of the savings of that class.

If I turn to the other side, what was the condition of the country in regard to pauperism and crime? The earliest returns that I have found of the able-bodied paupers of England and Wales gives for 1849 a number of 201,000; and for 1880, with a vastly larger population, a number of 111,000. Still more important than the returns of pauperism is the return of crime, and the persons convicted of crime, who in 1840 had risen to 34,000; in 1881, according to out returns, which may not precisely exhibit the proper state of things—because changes have taken place as between summary and non-summary jurisdiction, but which, upon the whole, will exhibit them—these convictions had sunk from 34,000 to 15,600. I have kept my word in so far that these facts have been presented to you in a brief and summary form. But are they not administrative and conclusive facts? Is it possible for any reasonable man not to be satisfied with figures like these?

As to the reality of our progress, and as to the cause of our progress, I will say another word shortly. Still there are delusions—at least there are uncomfortable dreams to break the rest of some of our fellow-citizens. They are dreadfully afflicted with this excess of imports. In passing I must pay a tribute of respect to one class of Protectionists, and that is to the gallant men who, under

all circumstances, with following or without following, with proof or without proof, and quite irrespective of the possibility of being able to turn the matter to account at elections, stick to their old protective doctrine. I mention that because the subject of the balance of trade irresistibly and rapidly calls to my mind the name and figure of Mr. Newdegate, who has been a consistent, but I must say a highly respectable prophet of evil, and respected for his unswerving integrity, and for the great regard he has often shewn for Constitutional principles in connection with this painful subject of the balance of trade. But you are aware by the old doctrine of the balance of trade it is shewn we have suffered a loss of 160 millions of money within a comparatively short period—about a generation of man. That is a very heavy loss, and how have we paid for it? Oh, you pay for all that in bullion. Well, but the extraordinary fact is this. Here the balance of trade has been most terribly against us during the last five years. From 1876 to 1880, when the imports—these terrible import that frown upon us and intimidate us in every port of the country as if they were all meant for dynamite explosions—these imports have been in an excess of £622,000,000 over the exports, and yet the country is not absolutely ruined. But while these £622,000,000 have been imported—and we have certainly had to pay for what we imported—instead of losing the bullion, the imports of bullion have been slightly in excess of the exports. The imports of bullion for these five years have amounted to £147,000,000, and the exports have amounted to £144,000,000, so that besides the £622,000,000 of goods which we have got, we have got £3,000,000 more bullion into the country. But, then, it is said, "Oh, but we have paid for it in securities." Why, sir, anyone who goes into the money market will know that the investments of England abroad, varying somewhat from year to year, have been tending rapidly and constantly upwards; and were we here to examine into and analyse the history and meaning of these vast imports, you know very well it would be my duty to point out that no inconsiderable proportion of them represents the dividends and the interest receivable and received by us upon our enormous investments abroad—investments which are

valued by the best financial authorities—non-official, but the best private authorities—at about 1,300 millions of money, and the income from which, coming back to us every year, mainly in the shape of imports, cannot be said to be less than 60 millions a year—our income in foreign countries from the surplus of wealth which we have sent out of our country to invest.

So much, gentlemen, for the balance of trade. But still they are not satisfied ; and you are taught to believe that the foreign trade of this country is wasting away, and that other countries, owing to their greater wisdom, have none of the inconveniences to contend with that we are obliged to encounter, and are constantly growing in all the elements of prosperity. And the two countries which our misguided brethren select for special admiration are America and France. Well, now, the commerce of France, above all others, requires to be divided when you treat its exports between manufactures and produce, because the exports of its produce go on without any material reference to this protective system. Our exports, as you know very well, fell seriously between 1873 and 1879. But do you suppose—because we are invited to assume—that the exports of manufactured goods in other countries did not similarly fall? How did France, with its protective system, fare in respect to the decrease of exports? Our exports fell from a high degree to one comparatively much reduced, but not so much reduced as the exports of French manufactures, for the manufactures exported by France in 1849 were £49,000,000 sterling ; in 1879 they had sunk to £34,000,000 sterling, and that was a greater diminution measured by percentage than the diminution which took place in this country. So that the existence of the protective system did not in the slightest degree mitigate, but, on the contrary, aggravated a decline in the export of manufactured goods, as it would do in this country if, unhappily, we were to be so unwise—which we never shall be—as to try this deadly experiment.

Well, now, there is also an idea that America is pursuing a course of profound wisdom in regard to its protective system, and we are told that under the blessed shelter of a system of that kind the tender infancy of trades

is cherished, which afterwards, having attained vigour, will go forth into neutral markets and possess the world. Gentlemen, is that true? America has been too long in various degrees a protective country. Have the manufactures of America gone forth and possessed the world? How do they compete with you in those quarters of the world which are, speaking generally, outside the influences of Protection? Gentlemen, to the whole of Asia, to the whole of Africa, and to the whole of Australasia—which, in the main, are outside this question, and may fairly be described in the rough as presenting to us neutral markets, where we meet America without fear or favour, one way or the other—the whole of the exports of the United States of manufactured goods to those countries amount to £4,751,000; while the exports to those same quarters from the United Kingdom were £78,140,000. Gentlemen, the fact is this—America is a young country, with enormous vigour and enormous internal resources. She has committed—I say it, I hope, not with disrespect; I say it with strong and cordial sympathy, but with much regret—she is committing errors of which we set her an example. But from the enormous resources of her home market, the development of which internally is not touched by Protection, she is able to commit those errors with less fatal consequences, with less inconvenient consequences upon her people than we experienced when we committed them; and the enormous development of American resources within, casts almost entirely into the shade the puny character of the export of her manufactures to the neutral markets of the world. And here, gentlemen, I am reminded that I was guilty on a certain occasion of stating in an article—not a political article—that, in my opinion, it was far from improbable that as the volume of the future was unrolled, America, with its vast population and its wonderful resources, and not less with that severe education which, from the high price of labour, America is receiving in the strong necessity of resorting to every description of labour-saving contrivances, and the consequent development, not only on a large scale, but down to the smallest scale of the mechanical genius of the country—on that account, the day may come when that country may claim to

possess the commercial primacy of the world. I gave sad offence to many—to many of those who tell you that they are ruined already. They were extremely annoyed and offended on account of this, which was not a positive prediction, but an intimation of a probability. I won't enter into it now. I know that was an offence to the vanity of those who are vain among us. But for my part, gentlemen, I think it one of the most sacred duties of a public man to tell the things which he thinks to be of interest and importance, and which may perhaps convey a salutary warning to his countrymen, whether his countrymen like to hear them or not; and I will say this, that as long as America adheres to the protective system, your commercial primacy is secure. Nothing in the world can wrest it from you while America continues to fetter her own strong hands and arms, and with these fettered arms is content to compete with you, who are free, in neutral markets. And as long as America follows the doctrine of Protection, or as long as America follows the doctrines now known as those of Fair Trade, you are perfectly safe, and you need not allow, any of you, even your lightest slumbers to be disturbed by the fear that America will take from you your commercial primacy.

Now, gentlemen, let us see what is our case with regard to the trade of the world. We in this country—whose life-blood the vampire of Free Trade is insidiously sucking—let us see what share in this little island we have got of the Free Trade of the world. In 1880 our trade with the world amounted to 698 millions in value, the largest, I believe, ever known of imports and exports taken together, and, of course, re-exports as well. In 1873, the year of our largest exports, I believe the total trade represented 682 millions. But I will take our worst year—the year 1879, which was the year the darkness of which called forth all the owls and the bats of the country and sent them croaking abroad in order to disturb us, and if possible to teach us to walk in the ways of another policy—in 1879, it is quite true, the trifling sum of 612 millions was all that passed through our hands in this business of exchange, with a population of 35 millions of people. Well, now, let us compare the trade and population of some other countries. The German Empire, with 40 millions of people, had

371 millions of trade. The United States, with 50 millions of people, had 239 millions of external trade, most of which, or an enormous share of which, you know was owing to our demand for the food and provisions that, thank God, she produces. And while we, with a population of 35 millions, had a trade of 612 millions, these two countries together—two of the most civilised countries in the world, both of them highly protective—had, with a population of 90 millions, a trade of 610 millions ; so that, comparing ourselves with these great and intelligent countries, man with man, you have nearly three times the amount of trade there is in their hands. Take, again, three other countries which I take on account of the large figures they present, their high place in the trade of the world. France has 313 millions of trade, with 36 millions of people. Russia has 183 millions of trade, with 80 millions of people. Holland has 116 millions of trade—a good deal of which, as we all know, is transit trade for the supply of the interior parts of the Continent—Holland, I say, has 116 millions of trade, with five millions, say, of people. Then, again, we have a population of 121 millions, with a trade of 612 millions, exactly that which in the disastrous year of 1879 fell to our share with a people of 35 millions.

Now the reason I have quoted these particulars is because I have not yet encountered that which is the favourite plea of our erring brethren—namely, that this is all owing to the railways and the telegraphs. You know that is what they say. They say, "We admit there is some increase in trade." They do admit positively that 450 millions is a larger sum than 51 millions—but it is all owing to the railways and telegraphs ; but if it is owing to the railways and telegraphs, why have not the railways and telegraphs carried the trade of the world from our hands to the hands of Germany, America, France, Russia, and Holland, which are full of railways and telegraphs—some of them even fuller than we are? Why are they not pointing to our depression of trade and shewing how small our population and trade are—for they are protective countries except Holland—shewing how small they are in comparison with theirs, instead of pointing to them in irrefragable figures shewing that Free Trade *plus* the

railways have done for us ten times more than Protection *plus* railways have done for France, or America, or for Germany, or for any of the rest of the countries.

And, gentlemen, that brings me to the last point that I intend to argue, but, really, I have made very little argument. I have not required to make argument, or to wander into the mazes of political economy. Very simple facts and figures, after all not outrageous in their number, have constituted the pith and the substance of the statement I have laid before you. But I am desirous if I can to get rid of this remaining false impression about the railways and the telegraphs, which have done an infinity of good for us; but at the same time I am perhaps entitled to say—because through the medium of one of our most widely circulating monthly magazines, before the cares of office were upon me, I endeavoured to make a very close and careful analysis by comparison of the consequences of railway and telegraphic enterprise on the one side and of commercial legislation in the direction of freedom on the other, and seemed to myself to establish—at any rate no one has contested the argument—the conclusion that, although very much is due to the railways and telegraphs, still more is due to that simple and happy specific of unbinding the arm of British enterprise, which formerly we kept in fetters, and allowing it fair play in the general competition of the world. But I think there is one point yet remaining, which, if possible, affords still clearer demonstration than any that I have quoted, and that is what has happened to our shipping. Now, if we compare what has happened to the shipping of this country with what has happened to shipping elsewhere, then, indeed, the results of that comparison are remarkable; because, gentlemen, you may remember that when the discussions on the repeal of the Navigation Laws arose, it was contended, and contended with some truth—I felt it myself, for one—that the pressure of foreign protective and prohibitory laws upon our shipping is much severer than upon our goods, inasmuch as it often happens, for example, that the law of commerce requiring a cargo to be sent to a certain port in a British ship in free competition with a ship of the country to which that port belongs, that that same law

would require, if human law permitted, that the next voyage should be from that port to some other port to which the law of the country does not permit the British ship to go at all, and from which it is excluded by an absolute prohibition, while its own ship is allowed to go to it. However, I need not enter into these details. It is admitted that in no case could competition be more severe. I believe in no case could it be so severe as in the case o the competition of British ships with foreign ships. Consequently, on the occasion of the repeal of the Navigation Laws, the whole Protectionist party of the country went into the deepest mourning, and they said in solemn tones —for they rose to higher flights than usual—and said it represented not Protection only but patriotism, a word of which we have heard a good deal on some more recent occasions. They told us that the repeal of the Navigation Laws was the destruction of the wooden walls of old England, and meant neither more nor less, according to the favourite phrase, than her reduction to the rank of a third-rate Power. All you who are old enough—and I am happy to think some of you are not old enough—will recollect the appalling vaticinations which went forth "thick as the leaves in Vallombrosa" over the whole of the country. But the result has been where the competition was the sharpest there the prosperity has been the most extraordinary—I might say, had it not been realised, in fact almost incredible. The tonnage of Great Britain in 1840 was 6,490,000 tons. That tonnage had risen in 1880 to 41,348,000 tons, or was multiplied more than sixfold.

Now, that is an enormous result, and that is a result not due to railways, because the railways do not run over the sea. It is due to British energy working without any other advantage than that. And it is a serious advantage, especially in certain states of the world. It may be that we have become the home of the shipbuilding trade of the world. But as between nation and nation, that is a very small matter. The shipbuilder of the Clyde will build a ship for a man in Havre on the same terms as he will build a ship for a man in Hull, and it will cost him as much to send the ship round to Hull as it will for him to send it round to Havre. Therefore, there is no factitious advantage to account for this astonishing result.

But I have got something to explain that in my mind is most satisfactory, although it might be taken on the other side of the objection. I do not at all mean to say that our ships are more than six times the bulk in 1880 than they were in 1840. Not at all. They are nothing of the kind. The reports that I have given to you are the reports founded upon clearances inward and outward. They are the measures of the actual tonnage employed in doing actual work. It is quite true we have not got six times the capital involved in the fabrics of ships. What does that mean? What will be your reply? So much the better. With the smaller capital involved you are doing a greater work. We are doing six times the work and six times the amount of tonnage, because of the employment of steam, of larger vessels, and of better machinery on board, but with nothing approaching an increase of six times the number of seamen, and doing the work, moreover, which six times the number of seamen alone could, under the old methods of navigation, have pursued, and that is not owing to railways; that is owing to the effect of freedom, combined with the remarkable advantages which have been gained by changing from wooden to iron shipbuilding in the conduct of the commerce of the world.

And now, gentlemen, what is the state of the case with regard to protected countries? There is a great bugbear that is continually paraded before us—the bugbear of the United States. And what has become of the shipping of the United States, and what has become of that shipping in its competition with British shipping? That shipping competes with British shipping not only upon equal and upon favoured terms, for this reason—when a British ship goes from hence to America, goes from hence, say, to New York, to Boston, or to New Orleans, and then has got to make its next step, it has not got a free choice of the ports of the world. It cannot sail round upon what the Americans call the coasting trade, round Cape Horn to San Francisco. The British ship cannot, but the American ship may, consequently the British ship carrying cargo to America has a smaller choice, and, therefore, a restricted advantage. I only say that to shew you that there is an inequality of law in the competition which is entirely

against the British ships, and in favour of American ships. Gentlemen, my boyhood was spent at the mouth of the Mersey, and in those days I used to see those beautiful American liners, the packets between New York and Liverpool, which then conducted the bulk and the pick of the trade between the two countries. The Americans were deemed to be so entirely superior to us in shipbuilding and navigation that they had four-fifths of the whole trade between the two countries in their hands, and that four-fifths was the best of the trade; and but the dregs were left in comparison to the one-fifth, the British shipping that entered into it. What is the case now when Free Trade has operated, and has applied its stimulus to the intelligence of England, and when on the other hand the action of the Americans has been restrained by the enactment, the enhancement, and the tightening of the protective system? The case is now that the scales are exactly reversed, and instead of America doing four-fifths, and that the best, we do four-fifths of the business, and that the best, and the Americans pick up, if I may so say, the leavings of the British and transact the residue of the trade. Not because they are inferior to us in anything; it would be a fatal error to suppose it; not because they have less intelligence, or because they have less perseverance. They are your descendants; they are your kinsmen; and they are fully equal to you in all that goes to make human energy and power, but they are labouring under the delusion from which you yourselves have but recently escaped, and in which some misguided fellow-citizens seek again to entangle you. In 1850—I think I am right in saying that in 1850 the relative percentages of America and England in the sea trade of the world were represented by 15 for America and 41 for England. In the sea trade of the world, in 1880, the 41 of England had grown to 49, and the 15 of America had dwindled down to 6. There, gentlemen, are the genuine effects of a protective system exhibited before you, mitigated in the case of America by its own internal energies, and the enormous field that is open to them—a field which in your case you would not find, were you unhappily disposed to follow America in her errors. And the last word I will say to you is this, in the way of

statistical statement: of the whole sea trade of the world, the 35,000,000 inhabiting these islands possess 52 per cent., more than one-half of the entire sea trade carried on by the entire human race, civilised or uncivilised. And yet so unthankful are we for the blessings we enjoy, and so unmindful of the dangers we have escaped, and the damages we have long suffered, that there are still many who go to British constituencies to invite them deliberately to march back from light into darkness, people who vainly and idly persuade themselves that if they are only sufficiently diligent and persevering they will convert their country to those pernicious notions.

Gentlemen, I have now fully satisfied what I think my duty on this matter in addressing to you a discourse that I admit, so far as you are concerned, is frivolous. It has been uninteresting to you. You knew it all before. I could tell you nothing you did not know. But some are not in the same happy condition. I hope that I have kept faithfully to the promise that I made that I should endeavour not to give a tinge of party to the discussion on which I have entered to-day, which yesterday I felt myself compelled to do. I hope I have faithfully observed that pledge; and I shall conclude by expressing my belief that every man in this room sees the force of these facts and figures, however curtly and imperfectly stated, and my firm conviction that the people of this nation have now come to understand and to value the system of commercial freedom, and that they will maintain those beneficent and philanthropic and most fruitful laws as among the solid and permanent institutions of the country, fraught with blessings to every order of this community and to all the nations of the world.

AUTHORISED EDITION.

IV.

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POLICY.

SPEECH

DELIVERED BY THE

RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE,

AT THE

Mass Meeting held in the Old Cloth Yard Hall,

ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8TH, 1881,

In the Afternoon.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

As my occupations have not permitted me to correct the report of this speech, it has been kindly revised by a friend. The same office was performed on my behalf with regard to my speeches in Midlothian by my friend, Mr. C. Parker, M.P.—W. E. G.

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POLICY.

The Prime Minister said: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have seen many remarkable sights since I came to Leeds. In this hall last night I saw and partook of a splendid banquet. It was a noble sight. In the streets of Leeds, in a long procession of two miles, I saw one nobler still: a population, in which your vast town was reinforced from the neighbourhoods around in hundreds and thousands welcomed me as we passed along the line And never in my life have I seen in so immense an assemblage, so remarkable, so singular a combination of an unbounded enthusiasm with the most perfect respect for order, and with a total absence at every point of our progress of anything and everything which could offend. But, gentlemen, to-day I witness a sight more remarkable and more acceptable still. I am now for the first time brought into contact, face to face, and within the walls of this building—which has been the scene of many a great discussion and noble triumph—I am brought here, for the first time, into contact with the masses of those teeming thousands who, 18 months ago, chose me to be the Member for Leeds. And so, gentlemen, in a brief, rough, and imperfect manner, my desire is, so far as your patience, sorely tried by the numbers in which you have met, and so far as my own limited power will permit, to render to you this day, and thus far, some account of the stewardship which you honoured me by conferring upon me.

The period of 18 months which has elapsed since the election has been one of great interest, and in many respects of great anxiety. I will not now refer to matters that I have fully discussed before other audiences in the town of Leeds, but I will endeavour, by way of general survey, to give you some such idea of our proceedings as may suffice to shew you that we have not been unfaithful to our trust, and that, surrounded by a body of the most

honourable and most able colleagues that ever were associated in the service of the Crown and people—some of whom are upon this platform at this moment—I have endeavoured to labour, with their aid, earnestly in your cause. Gentlemen, with respect to Ireland I will only say one word. We have looked to what is called coercion in Ireland not with satisfaction, not with levity, but as a mournful necessity, which it has been the duty of Parliament to employ, exactly as in other cases we are compelled to put in motion the powers of the State for the purpose of maintaining public order and the rights of private life against evil-doers. But it is not to force, it is to remedial legislation that we look with hope; and of that remedial legislation I will only say that we are determined to adopt every measure that may be found to be necessary in order to secure to the people of Ireland the fullest benefits from those beneficent labours which Parliament has this year so freely bestowed in their behalf.

Now, gentlemen, it has been remarked in some gatherings of the opposite party that we have not effected an economy in the public expenditure. Certainly, gentlemen, it is true; and I told the country before the election—when I did not know who would succeed to power—I publicly proclaimed, before the dissolution of Parliament, that it was impossible for some time that there could be economy. You know well, gentlemen, that in the case of every extravagant man he not only spends a great deal of money, but he contracts a great deal of liability; and it is rather too much that we should be reproached for having failed to effect a reduction of the public expenditure, when we have been compelled to ask from Parliament millions of money for the purpose of meeting the very difficulties and of paying the liabilities of honour and of duty, not to say interest, which our predecessors were kind enough to bequeath to us. But, gentlemen, besides the evil of a vast expenditure, which it was not in our power at once to contract, we found another evil staring us in the face, and that was the evil of successive deficiencies in the public revenue as compared with the expenditure. Now you will agree with me that whether our expenditure be small or

whether it be large, we ought to pay our way, and at least we have done this ; we have been able thus far to substitute equilibrium and even surplus for deficiency, and we have done that without adding to the taxation of the country. On the contrary, I believe that the changes and the adjustments which we have introduced into finance have done more to relieve those who pay the taxes than to impose charges upon them.

But, gentlemen, before the election a very large share of the attention and interest of the nation was attracted by the policy which had been pursued abroad, and by embarrassments growing out of that policy. The Treaty of Berlin had contained stipulations, not due, I am sorry to say, to the beneficent action of the Government of this country, but still stipulations which, although injured in many points and restricted through British agency, yet were beneficial and important to the subject races of Eastern Europe. To the heroic people of Montenegro the Treaty of Berlin provided for an accession of territory ; but when we came into office no practical progress had been made towards handing over to them territory in accordance with that treaty. We, gentlemen, did not scruple to determine that we would use the whole influence and power of this Empire in concert with the rest of Europe for the purpose of securing the fulfilment of that treaty ; and that gallant people, after a struggle of 400 years, whom we found with little and faint hope of the execution of the provisions that had been made, are now, I am happy to say, in possession of a territory which they had a right to claim ; and to you, men of Leeds, I am able to say that by your conduct at the last election you helped your brethren in their great necessity towards the attainment of that reasonable end. Not only the people of Montenegro, but the people of Greece had had given to them expectations of great advantage. Advantage in what? Not the advantage of an alien domination to be established over people with whom they had no sympathy, but the advantage of reunion with their brethren in blood and in religion, for centuries subjected to the yoke of servitude, but then panting with the hope and relying upon the just expectation of at length

obtaining relief. And now, gentlemen, what has happened? I rejoice to say that though no progress whatever had been made 18 months ago in the fulfilment of that purpose, a country famous in history, the country of Thessaly, inhabited from end to end by members of the Greek race, to which in old times we have owed so much—that country of Thessaly has been handed out of servitude into freedom, by the influence exerted by the Powers of Europe, to which you have contributed your full share. And never, gentlemen, in the course of my life have I enjoyed a purer pleasure than in witnessing the accomplishment of that work, the removal of that yoke, the re-establishment of that union among Greek populations of different regions, without the effusion of one single drop of blood. Nor will I omit to give to the Sultan of Turkey just credit for having freely concurred during the present year in that transition —a transition not quite accomplished yet at every point but so nearly accomplished that I may venture to speak of it as being substantially as a thing that has reached its consummation. But, gentlemen, I am bound, on the other hand, to say that the Sultan and the Government of Turkey know very well upon all occasions with whom they have to deal, and when they are aware that those with whom they are dealing are in earnest, and mean a thing to be done, they can be just as reasonable as other people, a reasonableness that they have exhibited upon the present occasion. And you, the men of Leeds, have helped them in the work.

Well, gentlemen, I go to other regions. I go to a region inhabited by another gallant people, the people of Afghanistan. That people, if they were united to us in the bonds of affection, would form a moral barrier—supposing a barrier were needed—for our Empire in India against the power of Russia and against her aggressions; and for my part I have more faith in moral barriers than I have either in guns and rifles, or in mountains and rivers—it would have formed a moral barrier on our behalf and for the defence of our great Empire in India and our fulfilment of the sacred and the noble trust which we have there undertaken, not inferior, to say the least, to the barrier which Nature has created for us, and which, happily, the

folly of man cannot destroy. The wisdom of successive Viceroys of India—most of them appointed by Liberal Governments, but one of them, and not the least worthy amongst them, appointed by our opponents—I mean Lord Mayo—a succession of wise Viceroys had endeavoured, by carefully respecting the rights of the Afghans, by avoiding every occasion of jealous interference with their affairs, by meeting their wishes in a friendly spirit, by endeavouring to efface unhappy recollections of our former follies—I fear I might say crimes—to create by degrees a kindly feeling between those millions of gallant mountaineers and the administrators of the British Empire, and I may say of representatives of British power. Well, gentlemen, about three years ago all the work of that wise policy was ruthlessly reversed. Again we invaded Afghanistan ; again we established our troops in every stronghold of the country. Again we shed the blood of their people freely—aye, too freely—over its mountains and its vales, and with that blood no small portion of the blood of the gallant soldiers of the British and the Indian Empires. And, gentlemen, for what purpose did we do it ?—with what effect did we do it ? Simply with the effect of converting into enemies those who ought to be our best friends—and of destroying the moral barrier between ourselves and the Russian Empire. Ah, gentlemen, painful and sad is the confession which that gallant General, Sir Frederick Roberts, has left upon record when, in one of his despatches, he told the Government to which he wrote : "You must found all your measures on the recollection and conviction of the unquestionable fact that you are the objects of the bitter and determined hatred of every Afghan."

And so, gentlemen, we were invited—and without our own concurrence, without the previous knowledge of Parliament, far less of the people—we were not only invited but compelled to send 70,000 men into Afghanistan, or to the North-West frontier of India, for this insane and criminal purpose. One of the first and weightiest duties we found imposed upon us was to consider in what way, with due regard to the safety of the troops and the safety

of all those who might have acted as our partisans, we could retrieve and draw back from a fatal position which a former Government had caused us to assume. I rejoice to say that, in great part, that work is achieved, and that those thousands, with the exception of those in one slight and outlying corner of the territory under peculiar circumstances, are withdrawn, and that the Afghan is again the master of his own country. If he does not quite know whom to obey that is not his fault, but ours. We broke down his Government. We brought down the grey hairs of the old man who peacefully ruled in Afghanistan in sorrow to the grave. We said, through the mouth of Tory Ministers, that we wished Afghanistan to be one, to be independent, and to be powerful. We made it, instead of one, a collection of fragments; instead of independent, we made it enslaved; instead of powerful, we reduced it to misery and to weakness. Gentlemen, we have made at the last the first stage in retracing those fatal steps, and we have hoped that by a steady perseverance in a similar policy we may at least efface some of the most unhappy, some of the most scandalous recollections which, I am afraid, will remain inscribed upon the page of history —happily with many good works on the other side— remain to sully the fair fame of England.

Gentlemen, there is another country with regard to which anxiety now prevails, and with regard to which I can speak, I rejoice to say, in a different tone of the proceedings of the Government that went before us—I mean the country of Egypt. In Egypt, as you are perhaps aware, joint action of England and France is established, which, of course, is open to a good deal of difficulty and a good deal of objection. The risks of it we are now beginning to experience; but, at the same time, I rejoice to say, and I am glad that those who went before us should have the full credit of their act, that intervention of England and France has been beneficial to the people of Egypt. I have no doubt that not only the finance of Egypt, which was in confusion, has been brought to order, but that the peasantry of Egypt, an easily governed, well-conducted peasantry, have had a great mitigation intro-

duced through European interference into what was a system of serious and grievous oppression. Now, gentlemen, with regard to Egypt I will not say more than this, that our policy in that country will be guided by the considerations which, as I rather think, you will approve. We shall endeavour to act in strict concert with the allied and friendly Government of France, and we have not the least reason to doubt, from all that has hitherto taken place, that we shall be able there to maintain a thoroughly united action. We shall endeavour to prevent the growth of any difficulties between Egypt and the Sultan of Turkey, and in that aim, I trust and I hope, we shall also succeed. We shall not, unless it be under some unforeseen necessity, seek to extend the limits of our interference, because, gentlemen, in every country what we wish earnestly is this, that its affairs shall be managed so far as may be by the free action and judgment of the inhabitants themselves. But in all that we do there we shall proceed, not for dynastic purposes, not for selfish views, not, gentlemen—I will fairly tell you—by any endeavour to make your interests paramount in the Government of Egypt as compared with the interests of the Egyptian people, but by striving to secure those ends which are for the benefit of the country, knowing as we do that we shall thereby best meet your wishes, best establish and confirm the character of this Empire in the civilised world, and best minister to the ultimate and real promotion of all its own highest interests.

I wish, gentlemen, that I could in the topic I am now approaching—and it is the last on which I shall have seriously to detain you—I could continue those tones of satisfaction with which I record the good results of the policy of the late Government in Egypt. But I must now pass to the affairs of South Africa. And there, gentlemen, when we acceded to power, what did we find? We found that a bloody war with the Zulu nation was just concluded with heavy charge and with a great effusion of blood to ourselves, with the painful recollection—I am sorry to say, so far as our convictions are concerned—that that war was a causeless war, and being a causeless war, left upon us,

as is left upon all who make causeless wars, the trace and the stain of bloodguiltiness. We found another war proceeding between a native race, the Basutos, and the Government of the Cape. We found a greater difficulty still—for that Basuto war has happily been brought to a close—in the condition of things that had been established by the late proceedings in the territory known as the Transvaal. A free population of a race not less tenacious than our own, of abundant courage and resolution, united in a form of Republican Government, had by this gratuitous interference of the British Government, been annexed, as it was called, to the British Empire. This, gentlemen, was to us a source of great difficulty. The assurances sent to us from every official quarter in South Africa were that since the annexation had taken place the Dutch population were rapidly becoming reconciled to it, and that when they knew it would be maintained, and that they would be fairly treated under it, all difficulties would disappear.

It was impossible for us, gentlemen, to ascertain in a day the real state of things. It was our duty to avoid, wherever we could avoid it, the disturbance of the great acts of policy performed by our predecessors. But, as you know, the Dutch population almost unanimously rose in arms to vindicate its freedom and its independence, and when that had taken place we said we were willing to proceed with them in peaceful modes, but that we could not allow the affairs of that or any country for which we had become responsible to be settled by the action of mere force. The leaders of the Dutch replied that they were willing—so confident were they of the goodness of their cause—that a Commission should be appointed by the Crown to inquire into the facts, and they expressed the utmost confidence that the Boers would abide by the result of the deliberations of that Commission. Gentlemen, we thought that a reasonable offer. In the meantime unfortunate military operations had been attempted with insufficient means, and blood had been shed without the attainment of success. There were those who said that we ought to have avenged those consequences of our own miscalculations upon the Boers before proceeding to negotiate with them.

Such, gentlemen, was not our conviction. We thought that to act upon such a course would be to act on a principle of shame both false and cowardly. We had provided ample means for vindicating the authority of the Crown, and having provided that sufficient force we determined at once to enter, on the invitation of the Boers, on friendly negotiations.

You are aware that very able men, able commanders and able negotiators on the part of the Boers, concurred with our Commissioners in framing a Convention. Under that Convention we felt it our duty to take the best securities in our power for the welfare of those native tribes, counted by hundreds of thousands, who inhabited the Transvaal and towards whom we could not forget the responsibilities we had assumed. We provided that power should be retained for that purpose. We provided that the Crown should retain prerogatives, under the name of suzerainty for the purpose of preventing the introduction of foreign embarrassments into South Africa, and we consented freely that subject to these conditions and to certain minor conditions in relation to money matters with which I need not trouble you, the Boers of the Transvaal should in all other respects enjoy perfect self-government and practical freedom and independence. We had the assurance of those who had led the Boers to military success, and of those who were the trusted agents for the guardianship of their civil interests, that the representative assembly, which is called the Volksraad, would agree to these conditions. The Volksraad has met; it has debated the conditions; objections have been raised; no motion adverse to the Convention has been made; but down to the present moment its ratification has not taken place, and requests have been made to us that we will reopen the consideration of subjects which we believed had been closed.

I must now speak to you in free, but I trust clear, words. There might in that Convention be points capable of amendment; there may be matters of detail and trivial matters, and of those I do not speak. When we come to obtain the light of experience it may be found that on one point or another amended provision might be made,

and it is only from experience that such light can be obtained. We have great duties to perform. We made large concessions, and you know how we have been censured and vituperated for those concessions ; you know and now, perhaps, you can understand with how little cause it was that we were assailed in Parliament, and that it has been sought to drive us from office on account of the liberal terms which we granted to the Boers. You may now, perhaps, better understand that what we attempted was to do equal justice, and in attempting to grant that justice to the Dutch populations which we thought our predecessors had withheld, we never for a moment forgot what was due to other considerations, to the rights of the native tribes, and to the general peace of South Africa. And, gentlemen, those men are mistaken, if such there be, who judge that our liberal concessions were the effect of weakness or timidity, and who think because we granted much it was only to encourage them to ask for more. I know not, gentlemen, what is to happen. I hope the Convention may shortly be ratified. But this I can tell you, that as we have not been afraid of reproach at home, as we have not been afraid of calumny in the Colonies on account of the over-indulgence which, as was said, we extended to the Boers of the Transvaal, so in what may yet remain to be done we shall recollect, and faithfully maintain, the interests of the numerous and extended native population, and we shall be not less faithful to the dignity of this great Empire in the conduct of all our proceedings.

I have only, gentlemen, a few words to say. It is a common reproach against us, the Liberals of England, that we are indifferent to the greatness of the Empire. One thing I will say : I hope the Liberals of England will never seek to consolidate the Empire by ministering to the interests of class instead of the public. And I hope they will never seek to extend the Empire by either violently wresting or fraudulently obtaining the territories of other people. We are supposed by many to be the enemies of Turkey because we have endeavoured to exact from her what we thought was just. But I tell you plainly it is my belief that the Sultan of Turkey has a confidence in us

that he had not in our predecessors, because he knows right well that we do not want to establish our single power of interference and disturbance between him and his subjects, but only to proceed in these matters by the general approval of Europe and the civilised world; and because he also knows that we do not want to appropriate any more of those islands which form an important part of his dominion. But, gentlemen, while I accord to our political opponents the full credit of a conscientious desire to maintain the glory of this Empire, I will say that if there is to be a controversy upon the subject, if we are called to descend into the arena, and to argue the matter here or elsewhere, I say it is Liberal and not Conservative policy which has made England respected and has made England strong. Why, gentlemen, if the old Tory policy of governing the Colonies in Downing Street had been maintained where would those Colonies now have been? They would have been by this time groups of independent States. But Liberal policy freely granted to the colonists, in spite of Tory censure, the very same rights that we claim for ourselves in the management of our affairs, and the consequence is that the inhabitants of those Colonies are closely and cordially attached to the name and to the throne of this country, and that perhaps if a day of difficulty and danger should arise—which God forbid—from their affection we may obtain assistance and advantage that compulsion never would have wrung from them, and may find that all portions of the British Empire have one common heart, beating with one common pulsation, and equally devoted to the honour and interests of their common country.

And so it is, gentlemen, with regard to foreign countries. We believe and are sure that the way to make England great in the estimation of foreign countries is to let it be known by every one of them that England desires above all things to be just—and will not seek to impose upon them any laws of action or any principles for the interpretation of their conduct except those to which she herself submits.

Lastly, gentlemen, as regards the policy at home, though some things are to be tolerated and endured in politics—it is good for us all to tolerate and endure

them; but there are some things which, when I hear them, are rather too much—I do think it a little too much when I hear described the great power of England, the industry of England, the trade of England, the wealth of England, the population of England, and when it is said that to all these matters the Liberals are perfectly indifferent, and that the only hope of maintaining them depends upon having a Conservative Government in office. I won't take you again across the seas; but I ask you, what are the proceedings which have made these countries great and strong at home, have increased your population, have multiplied your wealth, have improved your moral condition, have spread education? To whom are those things owing? (Loud cries of "Gladstone.") No; greater men and better men than you see before you. Who introduced and carried the Reform Act of 1832? Unless I have read history topsy-turvey, that was not the act of the Tories. It is true that Tory statesmen carried Catholic Emancipation, but they carried it by Liberal votes, in despite of Tories. It is true that a Tory statesman repealed the Corn Laws, but for repealing them he was himself banished—expelled from the Tory ranks, and other Tories, of a different creed and a different kidney, took his place, renouncing his aid, reviling his name; and these are the Tories that now, by a continuous succession—not the Tories of Sir Robert Peel and of the Duke of Wellington, but, as I have said, of another origin and another breed altogether—demand your support. The cruel criminal code of England was abolished. That was the work of Liberals, and not of Tories. The scheme of national education was conceived and established—that was the work of Liberals rather than of Tories. You may go through, gentlemen, the whole list of the beneficial laws by which it is that we have become, instead of a disunited and comparatively feeble, a united and a strong community, and you will find that more than nine-tenths of those laws have been passed by the Liberal party and that as to the other tenth, where it has been passed by, Tories, it has generally been passed by Tories who, on account of passing them, were disowned by the other Tories.

And so, gentlemen, I say that while we are opposed to Imperialism, we are devoted to the Empire, and we who are now in Government as your agents will, to the best and utmost and latest of our power, whilst studying peace with all the world, endeavour to persuade men into observance of the laws of justice and equality. We shall never forget what is due to the dignity of the throne of Queen Victoria. And neither in east nor west, neither in north nor south, shall it be said truly of us that the concessions which we make are concessions wrung from fear, nor shall there be a doubt of our determination, to the best of our ability, to maintain the laws at home and the dignity of the Empire throughout the world.

THE

IRISH LAND BILL.

SPEECH

DELIVERED BY THE

RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE,

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On his motion introducing the Land Law (Ireland) Bill,

APRIL 7TH, 1881.

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THE IRISH LAND BILL.

Mr. Gladstone, on rising to move for leave to bring in a Bill to further amend the Law relating to the occupation and ownership of Land in Ireland, said:—

Mr. Speaker, in addressing myself, Sir, to the exposition of, I think, the most difficult and complex question with which in the course of my public life I have ever had to deal, I do feel at least some satisfaction in exchanging the dreary work of repression in which we have been engaged for nearly the whole of the past three months for legislation which, at all events, we hope will be of an improving and reforming character. At the same time, I cannot but contrast the circumstances in which we address ourselves to this task with the happier circumstances of the year 1870, when the Government last attempted to deal with this subject. We are obliged now to enter on the consideration of a question above all things requiring tranquillity, impartiality, and strict balance of mind, in the midst of a state of things in Ireland which I do not wish to characterize by any strong language, and which is now happily in course of mitigation, but which at the same time we cannot call less than a disturbed state of things—a state of things so disturbed as undoubtedly to have influenced the minds of men not less seriously, perhaps, than the real and permanent merits of the Question.

Circumstances of its introduction.

It is important, Sir, at the outset to consider what are the grounds on which the Government are of opinion that we ought now to proceed to legislate on Irish land. I am bound to say that there are certain of those alleged or supposed grounds which I must at once emphatically disclaim. It is commonly said that the iniquity of the Irish Land Laws is a main reason for legislating on Irish land. Now, Sir, equity and iniquity may be in great part comparative; but I must say that, if we are to proceed on that principle of comparison, I think it is an exaggeration to describe the Land Laws of Ireland as iniquitous

Alleged grounds of the measure.

The Land Laws of England are laws under which, at any rate, this country has lived, has remained contented, has made extraordinary progress; but the Land Laws of Ireland chiefly differ from the Land Laws of England in the very special provisions which they present to us on behalf of the tenant. Neither, Sir, can I say that I think that the more extreme plans which have lately been broached in Ireland, and which have been largely commended to the notice, to the judgment, and to the passions of those who had to consider them, constitute in themselves any very valid reason for our approaching practically the consideration of the case. Those schemes, Sir, I must frankly say, have constituted in the eye of the Government a main difficulty in approaching it. I do not wish to ascribe to any hon. Member of this House, or to any proposers of those schemes out-of-doors, a consciousness of their character and tendency such as I consider them to be. But, speaking of many of those plans quite apart from the motives and views of those who propose them, I am bound to say that it passes my ability to distinguish them from schemes of public plunder. I hold it to be an occasion of just praise to the people of Ireland in general that those who have been engaged in examining into the Land Question do not ascribe to that people a participation in views which can be so characterized. In the 3rd paragraph of the Report of the Bessborough Commission the Commissioners thus describe the moderate views of the tenant farmers of Ireland. They say—

Some proposed schemes equivalent to public plunder; but Irish tenantry: not implicated in them.

> "The tenant farmers of Ireland declare that they do not desire the expropriation of the landlords or the confiscation for their own benefit of the property of others; but that they do desire to cultivate their farms in security, and to receive the full profits of their industry while rendering a fair rent for the land they occupy to those whose means have been invested in it."

And I rejoice to think that, such being their views, we have a fair and broad basis on which we may hopefully proceed. Well, Sir, neither, I am bound to say, should we think it just to propose legislation on this great matter on the ground, whether expressed or implied, of general misconduct on the part of the landlords of Ireland. On the contrary, as a rule, they have stood their trial, and they have, as a rule, been acquitted. The Report of the Bessborough Commission, which certainly is not deficient in

Irish landlords, as a body, acquitted of general misconduct.

its popular sympathies, in its 10th paragraph declares that the greatest credit is due to the Irish landlords for not exacting all that they by law are entitled to exact; and it likewise points out with perfect justice that if they had exacted all that they would by law be entitled to exact they would have been guilty of injustice; they would have appropriated the results of their tenants' labours in the improvement of the soil. Again, I find in the 9th paragraph a remarkable statement, which runs as follows:—

> "It was unusual," that is to say, in Ireland, "to exact what in England would have been considered a full or fair commercial rent. Such a rent over many of the larger estates, the owners of which were resident and took an interest in the welfare of the tenants, it has never been the custom to demand. The example has been largely followed; and is to the present day rather the rule than the exception in Ireland."

Legislation nevertheless necessary, and why.

But while it is satisfactory thus to indicate the good conduct of the great proportion of the landlords, there are other features of the case on which we do arrive at the conclusion that there is a great necessity for searching and comprehensive legislation. The first of these is that old and standing evil of Ireland—that land-hunger, which must not be described as if it were merely an infirmity of the people, for it really means land-scarcity, and still continues to import into the agricultural relations of Ireland difficulties with which as yet we have not been able completely to deal. It is this land-hunger, aggravated, no doubt, by the bad seasons of the last few years, together with other circumstances, which constitutes the necessity for directing the attention of Parliament to the subject of Irish land legislation. I am bound, Sir, to add, as a principal author of the Land Act of 1870, that defects have been developed in that Act which have seriously marred the completeness of its operation. Some of those defects undoubtedly—I will not dwell on details, it would be invidious—are due to changes which the Bill underwent after it had left this House, and in which we were constrained reluctantly to acquiesce. But others of them, I am bound to say, were involved in the original construction of the measure; and even if it had passed into law in the same shape as it passed this House, it would not have been completely adequate for its purpose. I hope, Sir, it will not be thought harsh or unjust if, after the tribute I have

striven to render to the Irish landlords at large, I mention as a third and conclusive reason for this legislation, that a limited number of that class have been distinguished by conduct different from the predominating number. There have been, Sir, both arbitrary raisings of rent and harsh and cruel evictions. It may seem hard, where there are so many landlords with whom we have not a shred of title to interfere, were it possible to sever their case from other cases around them, that they must be liable to interference on account of the acts or omissions of the few; but so it is, and so it must be, under the iron necessity of public affairs. I remember an illustration I may perhaps be allowed to give which occurred long ago; it belongs to the period of my early life, though I think it bears a marked analogy to the case now before us. I refer to the time when, in 1833, Parliament, by a very wise and great act of legislation, determined on the emancipation of the negroes of the West Indies, and introduced a period of six years during which there was to prevail a system of what was called apprenticeship, substantially founded on freedom, but coupled with a qualified and limited degree of compulsory labour. Do not let it be supposed by hon. Gentlemen from Ireland that I am comparing the relation of the West Indian planters to the negroes with that of Irish proprietors to their tenantry—it is only for a limited purpose that I am quoting the illustration. The system worked admirably well throughout almost the whole of the West Indies. Those who had been owners of slaves, and were still owners of estates, entered into the spirit of the law, and the progress made under the system of apprenticeship was very gratifying. But unhappily in one or two islands, especially in Jamaica, there was a knot of men who could not forget or sever themselves from the vicious habits of their early life, and contrived to carry the traditions and practices of slavery into the new legal condition which the legislature meant to be one of freedom. This was discovered by the vigorous philanthropy of Mr. Sturge, who emblazoned it before the people of this country. It entered deep into the hearts of the people; and in consequence of the acts of a few, notwithstanding the good conduct of the many, there was a sharp and

Harshness of some Irish landlords.

An illustration from West Indian history.

sudden interference with the letter of the contract, ending in the unrequited remission of two years of apprenticeship in the West Indies. Well, Sir, I think that, in the same way, some few landlords of Ireland—generally the smaller landlords—have contrived to inflict on their brethren in their own class much dishonour and much inconvenience.

Commissions of Inquiry on Irish Land Question.

These are the reasons on which we ground the necessity that has led us to come forward and propose to Parliament a measure which we think of great importance. Let us consider, in the first place, what is the guidance to which we might naturally look for our direction in the framing of a Bill upon Irish land. We found in existence when we came into Office a Commission which had been appointed by the former Government—a Commission with extraordinary width and scope—to investigate the working of the Land Acts. The Report of this Commission was sure to be a considerable element in the consideration of the case. But, at the same time, it would hardly be expected that a Government formed from this side of the House would be content with the sole verdict of that Commission. Partly therefore because of the gravity of the case, and partly because we thought it necessary that a body should be appointed which might give its undivided attention to the thorough and searching investigation of the Irish Land Question, Her Majesty was advised to appoint a second Commission; and we have now before us the results of both Commissions. As I stated, the Land Act of 1870 achieved but a partial success. I am compelled to say the same of the Commissions of Inquiry. From the two Commissions we had naturally to expect two Reports; but instead of two Reports there have been a collection—I might say a litter—of Reports; not less than seven in all. One Report of the Duke of Richmond's Commission, signed by a considerable majority, is flanked or backed by another Report of a not inconsiderable minority, including some names of great authority in regard to Irish land. One member of the minority, Mr. Bonamy Price, is the only man—and to his credit be it spoken—who has had the resolution to apply, in all their unmitigated severity, the principles of abstract political

A Litter o Reports.

economy to the people and circumstances of Ireland exactly as if he had been proposing to legislate for the inhabitants of Saturn or Jupiter. And when I turn to the labours of the Bessborough Commission the process of sub-division is not less remarkable. There were four Commissioners, of whom two signed a Report which, I must say, is one of the ablest and most interesting I have ever read, though we are far from adopting the whole scheme they recommend. But of these four Commissioners my hon. friend the Member for Cork County (Mr. Shaw) has signed a collateral Report, which undoubtedly, in some important particulars, must be regarded as a counter Report. Another — the O'Connor Don — signed a Report of his own, with proposals of enormous scope, more especially for the general purchase of the estates of all willing vendors in Ireland by the Government —a condition which he appeared to make vital and fundamental to any proposal for which he would be responsible. Lastly, there is, completely separate, the Report of Mr. Kavanagh. I will not mention his name in his absence without saying that he is one of the ablest, if not the ablest, gentleman coming from Ireland I have ever known among the Party opposite. Besides his ability, he is a man of independent mind; and I do not scruple to call him—making allowance for his starting-point—a man of liberal and enlightened feelings. This, then, is the result of the sub-division of the Reports. The more numerous Richmond Commission produced three Reports. The less numerous Bessborough Commission produced four Reports. The total number is seven. We are greatly indebted to the Members of the Commissions for the disinterested pains and great ability with which they have addressed themselves to their task; but our gratitude, I must say, must be mixed with some bewilderment. Although the Commissioners have not been able to lend us the immense assistance which would have been derived from their union in a body of identical recommendation, yet allow me to say that we have derived immense assistance from their Reports. The body of their fundamental recommendations is of the utmost value, because I look not only at the

points in which they disagree, but still more at those in which they agree. And what do I find? I find that, setting aside the single Report of Mr. Bonamy Price, the whole body of the Richmond Commissioners and the whole body of the Bessborough Commissioners, without any exception, are agreed in making a recommendation of the most vital importance—I mean the constitution of a Court for the purpose of dealing with the differences between landlords and tenants in Ireland in regard to rent. It is not for me to fix authoritative interpretations on the language of public men; and therefore I think it only fair, after what I have said, to read the recommendations of the Richmond Commission on this subject. It is needless for me to refer to the recommendation of the minority of the Richmond Commission or the recommendation of the Bessborough Commission. They are perfectly clear and unequivocal; but I wish to read to the House what I conceive to be one of the most important portions of the document before us—a short passage from the preliminary Report of the Duke of Richmond's Commission. It runs as follows:—

Government interference between Landlord and Tenant admitted to be indispensable.

"Bearing in mind the system by which the improvement and equipment of a farm in Ireland are very generally the work of the tenant, and the fact that a yearly tenant is at any time liable to have his rent raised in consequence of the increased value given to his holding by the expenditure of his capital and labour, the desire for legislative interference to protect him from an arbitrary increase of rent does not seem unnatural. Legislation properly framed to accomplish this end would not be objected to."

Now in that passage there is no express mention of the name of a Court; but I think I cannot go wrong in interpreting the passage to mean that and nothing else. In fact, I should say that it must either mean that, or something more; it may be interference, for instance, to give perpetuity of present rents without any increase. Clearly this is not what is meant; but, in pointing to the regulation by a public authority of the rents in Ireland, I conceive that I am making a fair, an impartial, and, I would almost say, a necessary construction of the language of the Commission when I say that we have that Commission, appointed by the late Government, appointed certainly with no special want or regard for the just interests of the

landlords, recommending that in the peculiar circumstances of Ireland there shall be legislative interference to protect the tenant from arbitrary increase of rent. I do not know to what extent the Noblemen and Gentlemen who signed that Report had considered the ulterior consequences of the proposition which they thus laid down; but I own it appears to me—and I am not now attempting to saddle them with what I am about to state—that legislative interference for the regulation of rent cannot by any possibility be severed from legislative interference for the regulation of tenure and from the regulation of the principle of tenant-right. That, however, is by the way; for I do not attempt to avail myself of the advantage of the authority of this Commission, combined with all the other Commissions upon this great subject, further than I have stated. But it is plain that the independence and the difference of the judgments which have been arrived at by the several Commissions give additional force and weight to the points on which we find them agree.

Land Law not now to be dealt with.

Now let me state to the House that this subject must be considered to divide itself into three branches, with one of which I have little or nothing to do. The first is that which is commonly known to us as Land Law—the whole important group of questions connected with the registry, the transfer, the devolution, and the nature of estates in land. These are matters which, substantially, I shall hardly touch to-night. I mention them now in order that the omission may not be supposed to testify indifference. It is my firm belief that no more valuable gift could be conferred on Ireland than sound and thorough legislation on these subjects; but it is not our work to-night. Every one will admit that it would not be possible to combine such legislation with the great and complicated subject with which we have now to deal. The two subjects are, indeed, so far connected that, proceeding on the same principles as we adopted in 1870, we are endeavouring to provide that whatever operations are contemplated by the measure, they shall be placed within the power of limited owners of the soil. Consequently we may set aside limitation of ownership, so

far as may be necessary for our purpose. The two great questions which remain are these: in the first place, the relation of landlord and tenant in Ireland; and, in the second place, that important group of questions which I may here gather together under the name of subjects which require advances from the Public Exchequer. These are the two branches of the subject which it will be my duty to open, and I must open them with many apologies, and with a respectful appeal to the indulgence of the House. In dealing with these questions I can hardly hope to be even accurate in detail, still less can I hope to exhibit the numerous provisions of the measure in their due proportion and relative bearing upon the whole subject. I fear that I may be justly open to the reproach both of being prolix and defective in the statement I have to make. But, relying upon the patience of hon. Members, I will do my best to explain the whole spirit and the main provisions of the measure we are submitting to the House. I have never as a Minister felt overwhelmed with as great a sense of the enormous importance of the topics and the propositions involved in it; and there is nothing that can legitimately be done by the Government which we shall hesitate to do for the purpose of promoting such legislation as shall deal effectively with the land question in Ireland.

The two great questions: Relations of Landlord and Tenant, and Public Advances.

It appears to me that the proposal to create a Court, or to allow of the reference to a Court of most important and numerous transactions of life between man and man—I mean in a material sense—has become, in the circumstances of Ireland, and with the authorities before us, quite inevitable; and that being so, it is evident that it must be a salient and cardinal proposal of any measure into which it enters. But a question of the greatest importance meets us on the threshold. Is this Court to be compulsory, and, being compulsory, is it to be universal, and therefore perpetual? or is it to be a Court as to which there is to be an option reserved? This question I shall have to argue before the House; but, before arguing it, I will speak of a matter as to which we have the deepest conviction, and with regard to which also I think a great deal of prejudice and misconception prevail—I refer to the subject of

Character of the new Court.

Free Sale.

assignment, generally known in the language of the three "F's" as Free Sale. In using the word assignment I use the word which I believe is best known to law and to history. As far as I have been able to observe, more objection has been taken to the legislative recognition of assignment, in those quarters where objection was likely to be taken, than to the other proposals of the Commission—namely, fixity of tenure and fair rents, obtained by the arbitration of a public authority. It appears to me that while this particular proposal has been most objected to, and appears to be the most unpalatable in many quarters, it is distinctly and decidedly the least open to objection in the circumstances of Ireland, and is almost absolutely ingrained in the necessities of the case and in the circumstances with which we have to deal. Now let us see whether that is or is not an unreasonable statement. I will speak of that which is assigned as the tenant-right of Ireland; and, for the purpose of my argument, the assumption is that every tenant has some right or other in his holding. What are the elements of that right in Ireland? They are more easily traced there than elsewhere. In the first place, you have the unquestioned fact that improvements have been to a larger extent than probably in any other country the work of the tenant himself. Tenant-right is the result of these improvements. Secondly, you have this great fact in Ireland—a land-hunger coupled with land-scarcity. With a supply of land in the market so much less than the demand, you have a state of things in which it is well worth the while of a man, who has not got land as a means of obtaining a regular subsistence and livelihood, to pay for obtaining it. That willingness of the incoming tenant to pay enters distinctly into the interest of the outgoing tenant, so long as he continues the tenant, as something he has to receive. There is also a principle of rarer but not altogether insensible operation in the circumstances of Ireland—that which may be called the *pretium affectionis*—the disposition of many an Irishman, even after he has left his country, perhaps driven from it by hard necessity, to find his way back and, if he can, to settle himself once more on

Elements of Tenant-right.

the soil. I may, perhaps, be permitted to mention an instance of this kind—no doubt an extreme instance, but, at the same time, an instance which will help us to see how it is that the tenant in Ireland thinks he has something to transfer for which he has the right to obtain what he can get. A landlord in the West of Ireland had, among other holdings, a rather miserable holding consisting of a small tenement and an acre or two of land, for which he received a rent of five guineas. Repeatedly, as he rode by the spot, it occurred to him that he ought to reduce the rent; but before he had taken any steps in that direction a returned Irishman from America called upon him and said he was very desirous to obtain a plot of land on his estate; he had applied to the tenant of this small holding; the tenant was quite willing to sell, and he was quite willing to buy; and he came to ask the permission of the landlord. The landlord said, "Very well, I have no objection; what are you willing to give?" And the man said he was willing to give £100 for this five-guinea holding. The landlord said, by way of jest, "Then I think I must raise the rent;" but he did not, and the transaction proceeded. Now that was as much a case of *pretium affectionis* as paying £10,000 or £20,000 for a set of old Sèvres or China ware. There are specialities in the case of Irish tenant-right. But what I wish to impress upon the House is this—that, apart from those specialities, the principle of assignment is a principle rooted in law. By artificial provisions, introduced into agreements through the commanding position of landlords, assignment has been generally prohibited; but the assignment of the tenant's interest, whatever it be, is a principle, not only of Irish but of English Land Laws, and of the Land Laws of Europe generally. The Bessborough Commission says:—

The Principle of Assignment rooted in law.

"For many generations the great bulk of the land under cultivation in Ireland has been held on small farms under 30 acres without leases upon parole tenancies from year to year. In these tenancies, by the Common Law, the tenant has always had a right of property which he might dispose of, and which was only determinable subject to conditions, the principal of which was the requirement of six months' notice to quit, recently extended by the Act of 1877 to 12 months."

I will quote a few words from a very able, though

concise, work of Mr. Richey, a professor of the University of Dublin, on the Irish Land Laws. He informs us in an early part of that work that yearly tenancies, when they first arose in the 16th century, were commonly called leases for the term of a year and onwards *de anno in annum*, according to the pleasure of both parties; and he says that the tenant was entitled, as any other owner of an interest in land, upon this yearly holding to sell or sub-let his farm to whom and on what terms he pleased. He then explains how it was that the landlord's consent came to be asked; and he says that, whether the landlord assented or not to the sale, all the interest of the previous tenant passed by the sale to the purchaser. I will quote, lastly, an extract with which my hon. and learned friend the Attorney-General has supplied me, from a work of Woodfall on *Landlord and Tenant*, in which it is distinctly laid down that tenants for even a less period than four years, but who are possessed of a certain quantity of interest, may alienate the whole or any part of it unless they are expressly restricted from so doing. A tenant from year to year may therefore assign his term or underlet; but he may not by underletting grant an interest exceeding his own in point of duration. I am anxious to call attention to the fact that this interest is embodied in the ancient law, because I think that fact meets, in a great degree, the fundamental objection which Gentlemen are apt to take to this period of tenant-right. They say it establishes joint proprietorship, which they consider a bad thing. I do not admit that; but if it does establish a joint proprietorship I hold that, in the absence of express restrictions, the old law of the country, corresponding, I believe, with the general law of Europe, recognizes the tenant-right, and, therefore, recognizes, if so you choose to call it, joint proprietorship. Well, that being the state of the case, how does it stand under the Land Law of 1870? It stands thus—that before the Land Act of 1870 the tenancy was determinable upon a certain notice at the close of each year, at the sole will of the landlord, and without any other consequence whatever. What the tenant had to assign was so small that the assignment was little worth giving or receiving. But in

and Law
f 1870.

the Land Act—not, I must own, with a view to fortify the principle of tenant-right, but simply with a view to defend the tenant in possession of his holding and to render it difficult for the landlord capriciously to get rid of him—we proceeded to enact a scale of compensation for disturbance, without which the tenant could not be removed. That being so, a valuable consideration was, by the Act of 1870, evidently tacked on to every yearly tenancy in Ireland. And, under the Act of 1870, whether we intended it or not, tenant-right has become something sensible and considerable. The actual sale of the tenant-right, as, I believe, is observed in a marked manner in the minority Report of the Richmond Commission, has grown and spread in Ireland, and the old idea of the people, running back into times anterior to tenures now prevailing, has in modern circumstances received authority and acquired extension from the legislation of this House. That being so, it ought also to be remembered that the recognition of tenant-right is certainly of very great practical convenience, provided it can be restrained from undue interference with the landlord's right, of which I will speak presently. In the first place, it affords a means of valuing improvements by far the simplest, cheapest, and most rapid that can be conceived. The improvements are worth that which it is worth the while of the incoming man to give, and so the matter is disposed of. Nor is it an inconsiderable advantage that the landlord is secured in all his just claims by the existence and recognition of the principle of tenant-right. It is admitted to be the first charge on tenant-right that the rent shall be paid, and that anything else which the landlord may have to claim against the tenant—as, for instance, in the case of waste—shall be defrayed out of the money received for the tenant-right. How does this stand with regard to the Commission? For I must say that the authority of these Commissions is a very important element, as all will feel, in our consideration of the case. Every one of the Bessborough Commissioners—Mr. Kavanagh with some reluctance—recognized the principle of tenant-right. The minority of the Richmond Commission emphatically acknowledge it, and the majority have not

Benefits of tenant-right.

said one word against it. So we stand as to authority.

Political advantage

But before passing from these recommendations there is one on which I cannot refrain from dwelling for a moment, and that is the immense political advantage that has been found to attend the principle. I do not think we could have a more vivid illustration of this political advantage than the state of distress which prevailed just 12 months ago in the West of Ireland. At that time there was a whole group of counties in which there prevailed extreme distress. In most of these counties that extreme distress was attended with great public danger. I refer particularly, of course, to Mayo and Galway. But there was another county where the distress was hardly by a single shade different from the others, yet where there was at that time no public danger, no public agitation, no disquietude other than the disquietude of humane and Christian-minded men at the sufferings of their fellow creatures; and that was the county of Donegal. And the only circumstance—for it is one of the wildest counties you have in Ireland—that made it differ, as far as human judgment can be formed, from the counties near it, in Connaught, was the circumstance that in Donegal you had tenant-right, while in Mayo and Galway you had not. Well, Sir, objections may be taken to tenant-right, and I am not about to propose an unregulated tenant-right. It appears to me that it would be very unfair to give legislative force to a tenant without leaving in the hands of the landlord, or of some public authority, the means of securing his own just interest. If a court is

Judicial Rent.

to be called on at the will of the tenant to limit the annual receipt of the landlord, and to fix what, in this Bill, we call a Judicial Rent, then I do not see on what principle you shall say that the tenant-right of the tenant is to be subject to no similar and analogous limitation. There are certainly some strong arguments other than the interests of the landlord in favour of that course; for it may be very fairly said that in vain do you cut down the landlord's judicial rent—and I am only assuming that the effect may be to cut down, for in some instances the effect may be to raise it—and take care that the landlord's receipts shall be limited if, with the land-hunger and scarcity which prevail

in Ireland, you still leave it open to anyone to pay an extravagant sum for tenant-right, and thereby to take holdings on the same virtually rack-rented condition. I therefore hold, and we have framed the Bill on that principle, that to recognize duly the power of the landlord or of the Court to raise the rent, is the due and just means of preventing the tenant-right, which we think to be the just right of the tenant, from passing into extravagance, and from trespassing upon what is the just right of others. We believe that by bringing together, on fair conditions and in fair competition, the right of the tenant to assign, and the right of the landlord to get, what his land is reasonably worth, we shall be able to obtain a result agreeable to justice and agreeable to the interests of both. I have detained the House at some length on this subject, because I am extremely anxious to do what I can for the purpose of showing, in the first place, that there is nothing strange or of an innovating character in the recognition of this principle; secondly, that it is rooted in the history of Ireland, and in the ideas of the Irish people; thirdly, that it is recommended by a multitude of practical advantages; and lastly, that it need not entail injustice upon anyone.

Now, Sir, I come to the great question which I think must constitute the salient point and the cardinal principle of the Bill, the institution of a Court which is to take cognizance of rent, and which, in taking cognizance of rent, will also, according to the provisions of the Bill, not be debarred from taking cognizance of tenure and assignment. The question first to be considered is as I have stated: Shall this Court be an optional Court, or shall it be universal, compulsory, and perpetual? If it is to be an optional Court, there is one vital matter, namely, that we shall be assured in our minds that the option shall be free. If it could be shown that in exercising an option with regard to going into Court an Irish tenant was liable to the same kind of pressure in any degree, either great or small, under which he now lies in the land market when he bids for land, I should say that such an objection would be fatal. But, on considering the matter as well as we can, we do not

Cardinal principle of the Bill: an Optional Court for regulating Rent.

see that there can be anything to interfere with the perfect freedom of the tenant in this respect. I mean, that if we say that by law an Irish tenant may go into Court, it is impossible for the landlord to bring any intimidation, direct or indirect, to prevent him from doing so. The case is something like this. An infirm man on a public road may be intimidated by a stalwart ruffian. But the presence of the stalwart ruffian will not interfere with the freedom of the infirm man if he sees some policeman on the road; and he would call in the policeman just as freely as if he had been under no fear of the stalwart ruffian. It appears to us that the aid of the Court may be invoked just as freely by the Irish tenant, if there be good reason for giving it an optional character. There is no reason why the policeman should be glued to your side for your whole life. Therefore we say that if the access to the Court be perfectly free, and if the action of the Court and the control of the Court be complete and sufficient, it ought to rest with the tenant to consider, from time to time, whether he should continue in the Court or not. There are other strong reasons for making the Court an optional instead of a compulsory Court.

Uniformity in Irish Land Laws unattainable.

In the Bessborough Report there is a short passage which says:—

"It seems desirable that, in the future, the same land laws should prevail throughout Ireland, and that a yearly tenant, in every part of the kingdom, should possess the same rights, and be subject to the same obligations."

We have not accepted that proposition. It appears to us that there are many weighty pleas to be urged against it. One plea is this. There may be tenants in Ireland who do not desire the interference of the Court. After all that we have heard with regard to the management of many estates in Ireland, I must confess that I believe it to be possible—and even likely—that there may be a considerable number of tenants who would rather be allowed, if they have adequate protection from the law, to conduct their own affairs with their landlords than be compelled to go into Court. Here, again, I call in aid the authority of the Bessborough Commission, for in the 79th paragraph,

notwithstanding their recommendation of a system universal and compulsory, they say this :—

"There will probably be estates among those which have been kindly managed, where the large allowances made to improving tenants, the materials given or sold under cost price, and the many other benefits conferred by a good landlord, would be preferred, by some tenants at all events, to fixity of tenure and free sale."

They say there that everything like fixity of tenure and free sale might in some cases be sacrificed by the tenant in preference to abandoning the benefits of the relations which exist. I do not exactly adopt those words as they stand, but I think they give important reasons in support of the belief that it is not possible for us at this moment to form a judgment as to what proportion of the tenants of Ireland there may be who would rather keep in their own hands the management of their own affairs than invoke the compulsory aid of a public authority.

But, Sir, I own that it appears to me that there are many circumstances in the case of Ireland which discourage us from an attempt to procure what I may call a dead or mechanical uniformity in the legal condition under which its agriculture is carried on. There is no agricultural country in the world the face of which is so seamed with variety as Ireland. You have, to begin with, all the usual varieties, and you have many varieties that are Irish, and exclusively Irish too. You have the grazing and the tillage farms ; you have the large holding and the small ; you have the large proprietor and the small ; you have the landlord absentee and the landlord resident ; you have the improvements made sometimes by the tenant and the improvements made sometimes by the landlord. For, happily, there are and have been landlords in Ireland who, in the strictest sense, are called improving landlords. You have the leaseholds and you have the annual tenancy ; the care-takers of land ; lands in conacre, and lands in rundale ; you have the lands over-rented through the operation of the great land-hunger ; you have the lands under-rented through the tradition of many estates, and in certain cases through the desire, and perhaps with the express purpose, of excluding tenant-right and assignment. You have the

old-fashioned Irish landlord and you have the new-fashioned Irish landlord; and although the old-fashioned Irish landlord was not an impeccable being, yet many of his sins, at least towards his tenants, were sins of omission rather than of commission, and in some respects will bear no unfavourable comparison with what I call the new-fashioned landlord. You have land under middlemen and land without middlemen; you have lessees in perpetuity; and then, above all, you have in Ireland the prevalence of local customs which have taken deep root in the country, and which, in my opinion, we should be incurring a very heavy responsibility by gratuitously endeavouring to wipe away from the face of the land.

easons gainst aking esort to he Court om- ulsory.

All these are very strong reasons, Sir, for making it optional to the tenant to consider whether he shall go into the Court, or whether he shall not. I am bound also to give some other reasons. I have very great doubts indeed whether—if we were, by a compulsory law, to refer the ultimate regulation of every bargain relating to land to a Judicial Commission sitting in Court—any judicial authority you could create would not break down under the weight so imposed upon it. I believe that it would probably prove to be beyond its strength. Then I cannot help saying, though I hope it will not show that I am disloyal to the cause of reform in the Land Laws of Ireland, that there is no country in the world which, when her social relations come to permit of it, will derive more benefit than Ireland from perfect freedom of contract in land. Unhappily she is not in a state to permit of it; but I will not abandon the hope that the period may arrive. After all, what the Irishman wants—and I do not mean to say it is his fault that he has not got it—is the habit of self-government. (Cheers from the Home Rulers.) He wants that which the Scotchman has got;—(cheers and laughter)—and I hope that by interpolating that objection I have sufficiently guarded myself against unwarranted deductions. But I say seriously that, though the creation of the Court may be, and I believe is, a right and a needful measure, yet you must not conceal from yourselves the fact, that it is one in the form of centralization, refer-

ring to public authority what ought to be transacted by a private individual. That may be an infinitely smaller evil than some other evil you may have to contend with, and may be therefore a thing that you ought to embrace with all your heart under the circumstances; but I confess to great doubts whether it is a thing which you ought to stereotype and stamp as far as you can with the seal of perpetuity. But, in any case, it ought not to be a one-sided Court. If a Court is to interfere, it must interfere for the purpose of doing justice. Therefore, speaking generally, we cannot lay down the proposition that it is to interfere for the protection and advantage of the tenant alone. We cannot make those who sit on the seat of justice forsake justice, even with objects in view so high and so important as the objects of land reform in Ireland. Well, Sir, if that be so, the proper conclusion is that we should not force anyone into the Court. We should leave the access to it perfectly free; so regulated by public authority that the smallest tenant in Ireland may go into it as fearlessly as if he were the greatest. Another conclusion is that we should not by compulsion seek to insure the perpetuity of what is, after all, an abnormal system—its perpetuity under all circumstances, however much they may have changed from those which now prevail, and however closely they may approximate to the circumstances of other countries where the relations of landlord and tenant require no such means to be employed in order to their just and satisfactory regulation. We therefore propose that the entrance into the Court should be an optional entrance.

The Cour not to be one-sided

And now I will proceed to give you, in words which I hope will be perfectly clear, those propositions which we justly consider the most vital and central portion of the Bill. Every tenant now existing in Ireland may call in the Court. The first purpose will be to find a "judicial rent;" that rent will be upon the basis of a fair rent; and we have thought it our duty to endeavour to grapple with the very difficult task—where none of the Commission show any particular readiness to deal with it—of giving to the Court some guidance in its efforts to arrive at a fair rent. The words themselves will be found in the Bill.

Vital portion the Bill.

Possibly they may be open to amendment; but I may describe the principle of them as containing a reference to a solvent tenant on the one side, and on the other side a due regard to the value of the tenant-right. When the Court has fixed the judicial rent, that judicial rent will carry with it a statutory term of 15 years, during which there can be no change. During that period there can be no eviction of the tenant without leave of the tenant or the Court, except it be for breach of certain specified covenants, or for the non-payment of rent. During that period there will be no power of resumption by the landlord, even with the leave of the Court, no matter what may have taken place as between the landlord and the tenant, or however grave the plea for resumption may be. In regard to the more purely legal aspects of the Bill—the event of breach of covenants, or for non-payment of rent—the process which will be adopted will be more fully explained, as the Bill progresses, by my right hon. and learned friends the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General for Ireland. The general idea is that there can only be a compulsory sale of the tenant-right in the case of a breach of the conditions of the tenant-right within the period to which I have referred; and at the end of that period the tenant will, of course, give up his holding. The tenant-right may be sold, according to the provisions of the Bill, at any time within the period at the end of which, under the present law, the tenant would be finally turned out of his holding. The effect of our proposal will be that the tenant will have allowed to him for the sale of his holding all the time which, in the event of non-payment of rent, is allowed for the contingent resumption of his holding upon the discharge of all payments to be made him. At the close of the statutory term of 15 years application may be made for the renewal of this time, and that application may be made *toties quoties* until a certain contingency, which I will presently describe, arises in the tenancy. When it is renewed the conditions as to eviction will remain the same; but after the expiration of the next term of 15 years the landlord may, with the approval of

the Court, and for certain strictly defined and sufficient reasons, resume possession. This right of resumption by the landlord will, when the holdings are in Court, be subject entirely to the judgment of the Court, because we fully recognize the importance of clear definition in an Act of this kind; but the cases which we recognize as fulfilling the definition of reasonable and sufficient are these. They must be cases either referring to the good of the holding, the good of the estate, or the benefit of the labourers in respect of their cottages, gardens, or allotments. The renewal of the judicial rent may take place, *toties quoties*, at the end of each of these terms, as long as the tenancy continues to be what in the Bill we define as "a present tenancy." I wish to draw the particular attention of the House to these terms, because, as we intend, a present tenancy does not cease to be a present tenancy simply on the change of the tenant: the only modes in which it can pass from a present to a future tenancy are these. If there be a breech of covenant, and upon that an eviction, the land passing back to the landlord, then a new tenancy arises. If there be reasonable cause for resumption by the landlord, a new tenancy arises.

Landlord to have the right of Pre-emption.

We have also, under the Bill, reserved to the landlord what is called a right of pre-emption in case the tenant wishes to sell his tenant-right. Not that the landlord can compel the tenant to do so; but if the tenant wishes to sell his tenant-right the landlord may, under the authority of the Court, apply for it and purchase it. If the landlord does not, the tenant becomes again the possessor of the holding. But we provide that his becoming the possessor of the holding shall not constitute any further tenancy within the 15 years after the passing of the Act. Therefore there will be no future tenancy created this way within the first 15 years after the passing of the Act. In cases where what is called the "English system" prevails, or, as we define it, where the holding has been maintained and improved by the landlord, we have thought that justice demands that the landlord should not be brought into a new and exceptional state of things which really has no application to the relation which subsists between him

and the tenant. We have left a large power of equity between the landlords and their tenants; but I must make an explanation to the House on this point with reference to the action of the Court, because it is one of great practical importance. A very lively and just susceptibility has been shown by Representatives from Ireland as to the effect of the Act in cases where proceedings with a view to eviction have been commenced; and it has been said that if you take the cases of excessive rent which the tenant has been unable to pay, it would be extremely hard that such a tenant should be deprived of the benefit which this Act proposes to confer on tenants as a class. What we propose, therefore, is substantially that where the process has been completed, and the redemption period has expired, there should be no interference, but where the proceeding is pending, where it has been commenced, we provide that the application of any tenant in Ireland, who is under this process, to the Court on the first day of its sitting shall have the same right as if it were made on the first day of the passing of the Act. The effect of that will be virtually to stay the proceedings to this extent—that it will allow a tenant to go before the Court and obtain the fixing of the judicial rent, and he will thus obtain a tenant-right, whether fixed or not, of which he will not lose the benefit on account of any proceedings taken before the passing of the Act.

Pending Cases of Eviction.

I think, Sir, that is a tolerably fair account of the main provisions relating to the action of the Court, with the exception of what I shall call the "judicial lease," which I shall explain by-and-by. It is more important that I should next submit to the House the case of what, in the Bill, we call "ordinary tenancies;" because, as I have said, we do not think it desirable to make a complete holocaust of free contract in Ireland, but to allow those who are satisfied with the present system to remain under it. We do not, therefore, deal with ordinary tenancies held by those who have no wish to avail themselves of the altered circumstances.

Ordinary Tenancies.

I will now describe the changes made in their case quite irrespective of any application to the Court. The ordinary

tenant will, like the tenant under the Court, be invested from the passing of the Act with the right of assignment. He will be able to sell his tenant-right. Of course, the landlord will have the right to refuse the purchaser to whom the tenant wishes to assign his right; but only upon reasonable grounds; and in defining and determining these reasonable grounds we have endeavoured to follow, as well as we could, the practice that now prevails in Ulster, and which is hardened into a sort of inflexible and recognized rule. The landlord, when the tenant desires to quit, will have the right of pre-emption of the tenant-right at a rate fixed, but not by himself. He may buy in the open market, or he may apply to the Court to have the price fixed by the Court. When the price of the tenant-right is fixed by the Court, in all cases where the holding has been improved by outlay on the part of the landlord the amount of such improvement may be treated as a set-off against the tenant-right, provided the landlord has never been remunerated by the rent paid or otherwise. I need not say that the landlord's claim will, according to the universal practice in Ireland, be satisfied out of the purchase money. Ordinary annual tenancies may be bequeathed; but they must be bequeathed to one person only. Of course the House will, I imagine, readily understand the object of that provision.

Increased Rents.

I now come to an important point of the Bill which refers to cases in which landlords propose frequent increases of rent. In cases of that kind the landlord may propose to the tenant an increase of rent; and if the tenant accepts the increase the statutory term ensues, and the rent cannot again be increased for 15 years. That is to amend one of the flaws of the Land Act under which unduly increased rents have been placed on the shoulders of tenants. But if the tenant refuse an increase of rent he may choose between three alternatives: he may sell his tenant-right; in which case the increased rent demanded will serve to diminish the price he will receive for it. But in cases where it is shown to the satisfaction of the Court that the rent was below a fair rent, the landlord shall be entitled to plead that fact as a set-off against any claims

of the tenant in respect of the increase; and the Court may dispose of any part, or even the whole of that increase. We have introduced a provision of this nature into the Bill, the effect of which may be stated as follows. If the landlord desires to raise the rent, he will be able to do so, presuming that the tenant will agree to pay rather than leave the holding. If, on the other hand, the landlord does not desire to keep the tradition of his property, but wishes to keep the rents below a value corresponding to the idea of a fair rent, he shall not be liable to have that eaten up by its going to increase the tenant-right; but when the tenant-right is claimed, he may establish the fact that the rent is below a fair rent, and have the difference set off against the claims for tenant-right. So much for the tenant's first option; he may sell his tenant-right and ask the landlord ten times the increase. His second option is that he may fall back upon compensation for disturbance and compensation for improvements. The third option he may exercise is that he may, upon demand for an increased rent, exercise his right to go into Court and demand the fixing of a judicial rent. If he accepts the increase in the rent, he obtains, *ipso facto*, what we call a statutory term of 15 years. If he exercises his option in favour of taking compensation for disturbance, then comes the change we propose to make. We propose to keep the scale of compensation for disturbance, but to raise the rate with regard to large holdings. I had better perhaps read to the House the scale as it will now stand. First of all, we strike out all valuation in regard to compensation for disturbance, and we propose that compensation for disturbance shall be regulated entirely by the amount of rent. If the rent is under £30, the compensation that may be given for disturbance shall never exceed seven years' rent; if under £50, five years' rent; if under £100, four years' rent; and if over £100, three years' rent. The scale at present is that, if the rent is over £100, only one year's rent is to be given, and if under £10, seven years' rent. That is the condition in which we propose to leave such of the tenants of Ireland as do not desire to invoke the protection of the Court.

There are other provisions of the Bill to which I will now very briefly call the attention of the House.

The Ulster Custom.

I have said nothing as yet about the Ulster custom; and on that subject a lively interest is felt by many hon. Members from Ireland. The general principle of our Bill as regards the Ulster custom is this. The Ulster tenant may, if he please, remain under the custom as he is now; but if he remains in that position, as regards the sale of the tenant-right and other particulars, he shall have the protection of the general provisions of the Bill for controlling augmentations of rent. We are convinced by the evidence that there is, whether extensively or occasionally, a very manifest conviction that the Ulster custom, if it is to endure, must have some protection; and it is desirable that if the Ulster tenant wishes to go into the Court he should be allowed to do so. If he accepts the increased rent, he obtains the term of 15 years, during which he will hear nothing more of increased rent. So much if he remains under the custom; but if he chooses to pass from under the custom and fall back upon the general provisions of the Bill, and go into Court like anyone else, he is at liberty to do so. Speaking generally, we have thought it no part of our duty to interfere with current leases in Ireland. But as to leases in Ulster, we believe their case to be peculiar, and we provide that the Ulster tenant, now under lease, may claim compensation, as it has been provided under the clauses of the Land Act, with the modification now introduced when the lease expires. I think that is all I need say about the particular case of the Ulster tenant.

Amendment in the law as to compensation for improvements.

We have endeavoured to amend the law with regard to compensation for improvements. At present the law is defective because it deals with the question under the phrase "improvements effected by the tenant or his predecessor in title;" and a technical difficulty, with regard to a breaking tenancy, has had the effect, in many judgments delivered in Ireland, of depriving tenants of the title of their predecessors as to compensation for improvements. We have therefore endeavoured to make an effectual amendment of the law on that point, so as to give the

tenant compensation for the improvements effected by his predecessor in title, and for which he has had to pay.

Judicial Leases.

Now comes the question of the leases in Ireland. We have provided in the Land Act of 1870 that a lease for 37 years should exempt the landlord from the provisions of the Act. But it has been stated that the feeble position of the tenant has been taken advantage of in some cases—though probably not in many—so far as almost to compel his acceptance of a lease, at a high rent, and on harsh terms, and with no remaining status at the end of the lease. Now what we propose is this: that any lease which is to exempt from the provisions of the Act must be a judicial lease prepared or approved of by the Court; and we have made it the special business of the Court, in preparing and approving the provisions of a lease, to consider the interests of the tenant and the valuation of his tenancy. So that I hope we have made a sufficient provision as to the terms of the lease. With regard to the provision as to the expiry of the lease, the tenant will be in the position of a "future tenant"—that is to say, he will not have the power of going into the Court and of getting a judicial rent fixed; and the landlord may, if he please, raise his rent at the end of the lease. But in all other respects the tenant will be an annual tenant, and will have power to sell his tenant-right.

Fixed Tenancies.

There is a plan which it is said some of the landlords in Ireland are disposed to adopt and some of the tenants are disposed to favour, under which there is to be what is called a fixed tenancy—that is to say, a tenancy where the holding continues, subject either to a perpetual fee-farm rent, without any variation, or a perpetual fee-farm rent with a re-valuation by the Court at fixed periods, and where all power of resumption by the landlord from any cause, however great and under whatever authority, is taken away. We think that to make a compulsory law of that nature would be to destroy the character of proprietor in the landlord in its essence and in its centre; and I do not require now to enter into the many grave arguments, perfectly distinct from the landlord's interest and right and including that interest and right, against such a proposition. Our proposal is that, in the case of

these fixed tenancies, the Court should undertake the burden, wherever the landlord and tenant are agreed, of applying these provisions. We have provided, generally speaking, that there can be no power to contract out of the terms of the Act; and yet it does appear strange to impose a limitation of that kind upon what may fairly be called large holdings. We cannot here adopt the rule of rent, because the power to contract or not to contract out of the Act might vary with the variation of rent in a manner almost ridiculous. The valuation is more paramount; and we therefore propose that there should be a power to contract out of the Act in cases were the valuation amounts to £150 and upwards—that is to say, speaking generally, that this power of contracting out of the Act shall only apply in the case of holdings of a value of over £200 a-year. We have also a clause substituting arbitration for a decree of the Court; and I think that the only other point I need make clear to the House is the nature of the present tenancy. We are desirous to obviate any such supposition as that the present tenancy means anything but a tenancy in the hands of the present owner. We say that, if there is no breach in the conditions, it is capable of bearing a continuing interest—in fact, it is capable of passing on from generation to generation, unless the landlord exercises the power of resumption under the sanction and control of the public authorities.

Power to contract out of the Act.

After this long enumeration I must still detain you for a very short time while I say a word or two with regard to the second and far less complex part of this Bill, in which at the present time the liveliest interest is felt. I mean the portion which I have described under the general phrase of the group of provisions requiring public advances. I would just take this opportunity, as making these public advances will constitute a very large part of the duties of the Court, of stating what we propose as to the constitution of the Court. That which will be, in one point of view, a Court, will be, in another point of view, a Land Commission. As a Court it will be charged with the final authority over the decisions of all land cases, and it will be the business of the Court so considered to lay down

Public Advances.

Constitution of the Court.

rules for the guidance of the Civil Bills Courts, which will really be the Courts of First Instance in all land cases. We did not think, upon the whole, that it would be wise to dispense altogether with the advantage to be derived from the great experience which the Judges of the Civil Bills Courts have acquired. It would have been very difficult to provide a new agency such as would absolutely justify us in removing the present powers altogether from the field. But we have endeavoured, in the first place, to make provision for calling in the aid of valuers where needed, and rendering that aid effective; and, in the second place, for their being subject to the rules of the Land Commission, so as to secure efficiency and uniformity in the administration of a very important law. The Land Commission will thus be the Court of Appeal, and will be the master, in what relates to land, of the tribunals below. It will consist of three persons, one of whom must always be a Judge or an ex-Judge of the Supreme Court. Its proper seat will be in Dublin. But, inasmuch as its operations may extend, especially in cases of public advances in connection with land, beyond the power of one set of Commissioners to deal with, we have invested it with the power not only of appointing Assistant Commissioners and other officers, but, if necessary, of appointing Sub-Commissioners to sit in the several Provinces of Ireland, and to conduct their functions under the control of the central Commission.

So much for the constitution of the Court, which will be charged with this double group of functions, each of which I think exceedingly important.

Public Loans.

Now I come to describe, and I need only describe briefly and rapidly, the important subjects which connect themselves with public advances. Do not let it be supposed that public advances are things unknown to Ireland. On the contrary, we find that as regards agricultural improvements, so far as the definition of the purposes goes for which advances may be made, it is, I believe, absolutely beyond the wit of man to enlarge them; and the change which we propose to make in the law is not in regard to the purposes of agricultural improvements, but in regard to

the agency through which they will be carried on. The first and most important point is that which relates to the acquisition of land by the tenant. I will not discuss that interesting question at present. I will only say that, economically, I quite admit it is open to a great diversity of view. It has in some cases been eminently successful. In Ireland you have many owners of land who have shown a faculty, which we cannot but admire, for it is nowhere excelled, of extracting the means of subsistence and the means of prosperity from very small holdings or spaces of ground. On the other hand, it must be admitted that, from whatever cause, small virtual proprietorships, under the name of perpetuity leases, have not been happily distinguished in the past history of Ireland. But I decline to enter into the economical part of the subject. What we desire, and what my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the original author of the suggestion, desires, is the political and social advantage of the people. We feel the great necessity there is of a serious effort on the part of Parliament to enlarge the circle of proprietors of land in Ireland, and to insist upon a more considerable portion of the community being in that body which possesses the traditions associated and connected with the ownership of land.

Acquisition of land by tenant

Now our provisions in regard to the acquisition of land by tenants are of two kinds. In the first place they are these: to assist tenants with money for the purchase of their holdings, without any further intervention by the Commission, where the tenant is able to buy and the landlord is willing to sell. I must say, on this point, that there are questions with regard to some Public Bodies in Ireland —possibly some of the Companies in the North of Ireland— which may be opened up in the discussion on this Bill, but upon which I at present sedulously refrain from giving my opinion. I do not wish to complicate this discussion with that matter. But a tenant can be assisted and fortified in the independent purchase of his holding, and where it would be fair to enable him to do it we are disposed to give every aid we can; and this, whether he purchases absolutely, or whether he purchases with the payment of a

Of two kinds. 1.

fine and the retention of a fee-farm rent on the land. But then what is more important is this—that the Commission is not only to assist the tenant in the purchase of his holding, but it is itself to become on reasonable terms the purchaser from willing landlords of their estates in order to re-sell those estates. Perhaps I ought, on this point, to say, without further delay, that a most important and difficult question here arises. We shall authorize the Commission, if the Bill be approved, to purchase where the proportion of the tenants, amounting to three-fourths in number and value, is ready to re-purchase, and to advance to these purchasing tenants three-fourths of the whole price. And here arises a very important question: Are these tenants to be allowed to borrow the remaining fourth? Well, we came to the conclusion that, upon the whole, they ought to be allowed to do so; and one reason which I think is conclusive in favour of that liberal arrangement is this—that already under the Bill, apart from any purchase of the soil, they will have the tenant-right. Having the tenant-right, they will have something upon which they can borrow. When they purchase, the tenant-right will merge in the fee; and it will be extremely hard upon them, when they have become not only possessed of the tenant-right but are absolutely part owners of the soil, that when they have become the actual owners of a piece of land they should lose the power of borrowing which they possessed before. We propose that those purchases shall be entirely relieved from the difficulty as to the legal expenses of the purchase. We shall charge them a lump sum, and that lump sum will cover the law conveyance and every other charge. It will be so calculated as to do no more than fairly remunerate the State for the cost and labour involved in conducting the private business of individuals.

Terms on which tenants wishing to purchase are to receive State aid.

There is yet a further and not less important boon which we propose to confer. Of course we are obliged to provide that while the holding continues subject to a charge it should not be sub-let or sub-divided. When it ceases to become subject to a charge the owner will become absolute master and landlord. But the boon to which I

Title of Purchasers to be guaranteed.

refer is this: we mean to guarantee the title of these purchasers. Now that is a provision of great importance; for, if you recollect, the Commissioners will not have a Parliamentary title themselves, but they will have a power of investigation, and they will be able, in the enormous majority of cases—almost in every case—to attain to a moral certainty. That which they will surrender, that which they will endanger, by giving this perfectness of title will be something very small; that which they will confer on the tenant purchaser will be something very great and essential.

This is a brief account, a rude outline, of what we propose with regard to the provisions for the acquisition of land by tenants. So far as the rules of action are concerned, with regard to agricultural improvements, I have already stated that nothing can be more liberal or comprehensive than the definition of the purposes for which the State is authorized to advance, and desires to make advances, both to owners and tenants—including leases—wherever they have an interest sufficient to constitute in any degree a basis of public security; and to show that I am not misleading the House in making this statement, I may observe that since the Famine the sum advanced in Ireland for the whole group of purposes of this kind appears to be not less than £17,500,000. The change we make is this: we propose to authorize the advances, not only to owners and to tenants, but likewise to solvent companies. Companies may be formed for the purpose of the reclamation of land, for planting, or for other agricultural improvements; and the condition which we propose to require is this—that our advances shall not be greater than one-half the sums which the companies themselves have procured and laid out, except in the case where they obtain the cover of a baronial guarantee; and then the sums we can advance, instead of being limited to one-half, may amount to as much as two-thirds.

Loans also to Companies for reclamation of land, &c.

There is another subject which cannot be omitted; but it is one of delicacy as well as of importance. I mean the subject of emigration. It is impossible for the Government to pass it by; but at the same time they are of opinion

Emigration.

that it is a matter in which there must be great caution. There must be great caution in dealing with anything like what I may call sporadic emigration; but there may be well regulated emigration—emigration of communities, carrying with them their local organization and traditions—which may possibly be carried on to the great advantage of all parties and to the individuals themselves. Keeping that in view, we include emigration amongst the purposes for which public advances may be made. This matter will not be, like advances for public works and so forth, under the control of the ordinary machinery of the Government; subject to the consent of the Treasury, it will be under the Land Commission, which may make advances for this purpose either, in the first place, to Colonial Governments—and in the case of Canada we include not only the Dominion but also the Provincial Legislatures—and, in the second place, to Companies.

Prudential Rule the only limit as to amount of Public Advances.

So much for the purposes of the advances that we propose Parliament shall undertake in general terms to make. It may perhaps be asked what is the amount up to which these advances may be made? Well, Sir, we have much considered the matter, and we have thought it our duty not to place any other limit than prudential rule on the amount which Parliament may think it right from year to year to give. Let us take care not to charge the State with duties which it cannot perform. Let us take care that when we make advances they are covered by reasonable security. Let us take care that we do not tempt others into foolish measures. But, adopting all the rules of prudence, we should not like to say that either £5,000,000 or £10,000,000, or any other number of millions, was the absolute limit which could in no case be passed. And there is another reason for this course, which is complimentary to my right hon. friend opposite, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think it was in his time that full recognition was given to the principle that these advances of public money, though they are against assets, and are upon security, ought to be kept under the control of Parliament precisely like public expenditure. I think it was my right hon. predecessor

who first gave full effect to that principle, and established that good and excellent system under which the annual prospective wants of the State for all these purposes are now confided in the Treasury, and a Bill is brought down to Parliament asking it for whatever sum is shown to be necessary. I should have been sorry to infringe on any good law or measure which I found was due to the forethought and care of my predecessor; and in this case I think the principles of Parliamentary control are in happy coincidence with our general purposes. I do not hesitate to say, on the part of the Government, that in our opinion the system of advances for the several purposes I have described ought to be tested by its working. We ought to be very slow indeed to fix a merely pecuniary limit so long as the bounds of prudence are respected, the essential conditions are fulfilled, and while we find the people of Ireland able and willing to avail themselves of the provisions of this Bill.

Summary of the Bill.

I think I have now gone through the most important provisions of this measure. I feel that I have led the House through a wilderness of detail through which I do not know whether I can supply them with a clue; but I will, in a very few words, try to sum up the effect of what I have said. I ought, perhaps, to have stated before that as to the descriptions of tenancies in Ireland to which this Act applies, they are substantially the same as those contemplated by the Land Act of 1870. Therefore, when I speak of tenancies in Ireland, I mean such tenancies as come under the Act of 1870. We propose to set up, on the one hand, a system of limited and regulated freedom of contract between landlord and tenant. But, in consideration of the circumstances of Ireland, we propose that the tenant shall, notwithstanding, be fortified by certain provisions of the law as to his right of sale and as to guarantees against arbitrary increase of rent. On the other hand, we offer free entrance into Court for the settlement of all questions which may arise between the parties, so that no matter relating either to tenure, or to assignment of land, or to rent, can escape the supervision of the public authority—the Court—

if the present tenant desires it. The Court must act on general principles of justice; and if the improved general law keep a tenant out of Court, it will do so because he thinks it his interest to remain out of Court. I fully admit that in the case of any country in which the agricultural relations were established on a tolerably good and happy footing, it would be an extremely sorry offer to make, either to a landlord or a tenant, to tell him that he might have the privilege of going into a Court of Justice for the purpose of making his bargain. Still, in the peculiar state of affairs in Ireland, it is what we deliberately and advisedly propose to do. We have accordingly made the entrance into Court an essential part of the Bill; indeed it is the very core and centre of the measure we now submit.

On the morning that this Bill passes every landlord and tenant will be subject to certain new provisions of the law of great importance. In the first place, an increase of rent will be restrained by certain rules. In the second place, the compensation for disturbance will be regulated according to different rates. And, in the third place—more important probably than any—the right to sell the tenant's interest will be universally established. These are some of the means outside the Court which we propose; but there will also remain to the tenant the full power of going to the Court to fix a judicial rent, which may be followed by judicial tenant-right. The judicial rent will entail a statutory term of 15 years, the renewal of it *toties quoties* to be provided so long as the present tenancy exists, and the present tenancy not to be determined by the mere change of tenants. Evictions will hereafter, we trust, be only for default; and resumption by the landlord, apart from the default of the tenant, will disappear from Ireland, except it be from causes both reasonable and grave, and such as may be brought into question before the Court.

Legislation for Ireland not hopeless.

We are sometimes told that it is a hopeless business to legislate for Ireland. I am not of that opinion. Let us consider what has happened in Parliament in our time. For half a century, and half a century alone, Parliament has been intermittently—but still, on the whole, not without

resolution, and not without good intention—engaged in the attempt of applying to Ireland better, larger, and more liberal systems of policy and legislation. And what has happened in Ireland in that time? No country has reaped larger benefits from the great transition between Protection and Free Trade—benefits absolutely unmixed, for the price of everything that Ireland produced was raised. In England the tenant farmer had to face a decrease in the price of his principal commodity, on which he had always mainly and unduly relied for the payment of his rent—namely, his wheat. But Ireland is a country which imported more wheat than was grown. The benefit to her accordingly, in that respect, has been unmixed, and from other causes it has been abundant. Look at the improved condition of the people. What old man is there in Ireland now who can compare unfavourably the condition of the people at present in every part of Ireland with what it was half a century ago? or who can overlook the great transformation that has taken place in the country without thanking God for what has occurred? Look at the increase of wages; to say that they have doubled in many cases would be saying what is very far within the mark. Look at the diminution of crime. The homicides of Ireland have shrunk to a mere fraction of what, within my recollection, they habitually were. The small holdings—the very knot of the difficulty, not yet overcome—have, after all, kept on a steady progress of diminution. In 1851 they were 280,000; in 1861 they were 269,000 (Ironical cheers.) I am now speaking of holdings under 15 acres, and I believe they are a source of great difficulty in Ireland. I have no aversion to small holdings. In England I delight to see them. I may say I abhor the system which has prevailed in Ireland—the system of what is called the wholesale consolidation of farms. Still I have no doubt that the diminution of small holdings in Ireland is a sign of the progress of the country. In 1851, as I have said, there were 280,000; in 1861 they were 269,000; in 1871 they were 246,000; and in 1879 they were 227,000. That cannot be said to be a violent diminution; nor can I wish to see a diminution in any respect resembling that which succeeded the Famine. That which has taken place

Appeal to facts.

seems to me to be a diminution under the influence of gentler and more natural causes ; and if by those causes the diminution can be carried further, especially in a few districts of the country, I have no doubt—in fact, it is proved in evidence—that it will be greatly for the advantage of the people of Ireland. On the other hand, holdings above 15 acres have increased considerably in number. In 1851 they were 149,000 ; in 1879 they were 171,000.

And here, Sir, there is another statement which I wish to notice, although it comes from a source not particularly sympathetic or gentle towards me. Indeed the pamphlet from which I quote rather violently denounces the Land Act of 1870, for which I am greatly responsible. It is a pamphlet which is called *Facts and Figures*, published by the Land Committee of Ireland, and I assume nothing on its behalf except its good faith and the competency of the people who wrote it.

Now here are some very interesting facts on which I cannot but think reliance may be placed ; and if they be facts, they will tend to correct a mischievous misapprehension that has gone abroad, to the effect that changes and raisings of rent have become more frequent during late years in Ireland, at least as far as the larger estates are concerned. For these facts and figures, and the operations of the Land Committee, do not profess to have a great deal to do with, or to speak for, the smaller estates. What they state is this. They give an account of 4,703,000 acres of land in Ireland, which makes an area so large that we cannot suppose it not to be representative of a large proportion of the entire country. From page 19 of the pamphlet from which I quote, you will find the following figures :—In the 10 years between 1850 and 1860 the rents were changed, that is to say raised, for that is evidently the meaning of it, on 1,515,000 acres. In the 10 years between 1860 and 1870 the rents were raised on 868,000. And in the 10 years between 1870 and 1880, that is, during the period since the Land Act was passed, the rents were only raised on 326,000 acres, or less than one-fourth of the acreage on which the rents had been raised in the decade of 20 years before.

Take next the case of evictions, which is the last test I will apply, to show that we have some reason to think that the labour of Parliament has not been altogether wasted in Ireland. I take the 15 years from 1854 to 1868, and I compare them with the eight years since the Land Act of 1870, and before the unhappy seasons of 1878 and 1879. In these 15 years, ending in 1868, the maximum number of evictions was 1,825; the minimum was 459, and the average 932. In the eight years between the Land Act and 1878 the maximum number of evictions had fallen from 1,825 to 592, the minimum number from 459 to 368, and the average number from 932 to 467, or exactly one-half.

Those figures are a great encouragement to us. There may be other facts, Sir, which are disheartening enough; but those which I have quoted are such as ought to teach us neither to despair nor even to despond. And there is a higher and a nobler encouragement still than this, and one to be enjoyed by all men who have faith in certain principles of action. It is said that our legislation has failed in Ireland. I do not admit failure. I admit the success to be incomplete. I am now asked how it is to be made complete. I say by patient perseverance in well-doing; by steady adherence to the work of justice. We shall then not depend upon the results of the moment. It will not be what to-day may say or what to-morrow may say; it will be rather what fruits we shall reap in the long future of a nation's existence. In dealing with that we proceed upon a reckoning which cannot fail. Justice, Sir, is to be our guide. And, as it has been said that love is stronger than death, even so justice is stronger than popular excitement, stronger than the passions of the moment, stronger even than the grudges, the resentments, and the sad traditions of the past. Walking in that path we cannot err. Guided by that light—that Divine light—we are safe. Every step that we take upon our road is a step that brings us nearer to the goal, and every obstacle, even although for the moment it may seem insurmountable, can only for a little while retard, and never can defeat, the final triumph. Conclusion.

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THE

CONSERVATIVE DEMONSTRATION AT WOODSTOCK.

SPEECHES

DELIVERED BY

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, M.P.,

MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.,

AND THE

RIGHT HON. E. GIBSON, Q.C., M.P.,

ON

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1880.

CORRECTED ON AUTHORITY.

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DECEMBER, 1880.

CONSERVATIVE BANQUET AT WOODSTOCK.

The inaugural banquet of the Woodstock Conservative Association was held on Tuesday, November 30th, at Woodstock, in a temporary structure erected close to the gate of Blenheim-park; Lord Randolph Churchill, M.P., chairman of the new association, presided. Among the guests were the Marquis of Salisbury, the Earl of Jersey, Lord Valentia, Lord Wimborne, Lord W. Nevill, Mr. E. Gibson, M.P., Sir H. D. Wolff, M.P., Mr. A. Balfour, M.P., Mr. Gorst, M.P., Mr. Chaplin, M.P., Colonel Harcourt, M.P., Colonel North, M.P., Sir G. Bowyer, Sir M. White Ridley, M.P., and Mr. Albert Brassey.

After the usual loyal toasts,

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, M.P., said,—It is now my pleasing duty to propose to you a toast which embodies all that we are met to celebrate and aspire to. We can look back with satisfaction on former Conservative triumphs; we may learn a useful lesson from recent Conservative reverses; but we pledge ourselves in drinking this toast to leave no stone unturned, individually and collectively, to regain for the Conservative party the confidence of the country and the control of public affairs. I need not now expatiate on the disasters of the late election, nor on the brief, but sufficient experience which we have since enjoyed of the blessings of Radical Government. We have present public men of great eminence who will, no doubt, do justice to these questions. I have heard it remarked in various societies, I have seen it insisted on in the Press, and I have noticed that it has been urged by men of the highest respectability, that it is of vital importance that the Conservative party should be united; and I do not think it would be possible for the wisest man upon this earth to make a wiser remark. (Cheers.) It is for the purpose of promoting that unity in this locality that this association, whose inaugural festival we celebrate to-night, has been founded and will be maintained; but there is a little danger in relying too much on mere phrases, and I would venture to point out that there are two kinds of unity —the one negative, so to speak, the other positive. The former is specious and plausible in appearance, but it resembles rather the unity of spectators at a theatre—it will leave you pretty well where you are, and you will be forgotten in the march of time and left behind in the progress of events. The positive unity, however, which is essential to our fortunes, is a unity of unhesitating purpose, a unity of determined action, a unity of unswerving courage, and, above all, a unity of unfaltering faith in

those great principles on which the Tory Party has been founded and by which it must stand or fall. We are highly favoured this evening by the presence of a great statesman, whose reputation has spread far beyond the limits of this country, and whose name is honoured in the Courts and Parliaments of Christendom. There are many large towns in England in which are many thousands of good and true Conservatives who will greatly envy the privilege which Woodstock possesses to-night, but I am sure that the Marquis of Salisbury will have no doubt of our deep appreciation of the honour he has done us. The Tory Party has had great leaders in the past; it has in Lord Beaconsfield a great leader now; but we may reflect with unqualified satisfaction that as long as the Tory Party has the good fortune to be swayed by the counsels of the noble marquis who is our guest to-night, our principles will be impressed upon the mind of the country with all that ability and high genius which have made him so renowned, and that in the momentous struggles which are at hand he will inspire our party with that positive unity by which alone triumphant victory can be secured. (Cheers.) I ask you to drink "Success to the Conservative Cause and Prosperity and Permanence to this Association," and to testify by your enthusiasm a great welcome to Lord Salisbury, whose name I couple with this toast, with gratitude to him for his presence here to-night. (Loud cheers.)

The MARQUIS of SALISBURY, who on rising to respond was greeted with enthusiastic cheers, said,—My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, —I acknowledge with sincere gratitude the kind reception which you have given to the toast which has just been proposed, and also to the flattering manner in which my noble friend has connected my name with it. We meet undoubtedly in circumstances less prosperous than those which have surrounded us for many a year, but I feel sure that this meeting will see in that condition only an incentive to more perfect union and more energetic action. (Cheers.) Such an assemblage as this, gathered, as it necessarily must be, from some little distance, is no slight testimony to the enthusiasm which the Conservative cause still inspires in this portion of England at least, and I may, perhaps, be permitted to congratulate myself that among those who have contributed to this overflowing audience there are some who represent the strong Conservative opinions of the neighbouring University, and from whose numbers and fromthe numbers of the academical generation to which they belong we well know that the future leaders of the State, at a time when many who now address you have passed away, must necessarily be chosen. (Hear, hear.) We are no doubt a party which, as my noble friend expressed it, depends more for its efficiency upon positive than upon negative principles of union. We are accustomed not merely to applaud abstract sentiments, but to act heartily together; and even during the short Session which has passed away since the election which placed the Conservative Party in a minority, that Party which, under the sagacious guidance of Sir Stafford Northcote (cheers), represents Conservative principles in the House of Commons has

shown itself to be an active, an energetic, and a thoroughly united party. Those whom I now address, mainly consisting of the constituents of the ancient borough of Woodstock, will feel no slight satisfaction in reflecting that there was no member who contributed to the manly attitude of the Conservative Party by his ability, his energy, and his resource so much as my noble friend in the chair, the member for Woodstock. (Cheers.) But it is necessary, not only that members of Parliament should act, but that their constituents, at election times and out of election times, should be ready to support and encourage them. We live in times which admit of no political inaction, and hardly of a political truce. In foreign affairs, perhaps, the sky looks a little brighter than it did. Lord Granville, indeed, the other night assured us that he himself was in a state of radiance (laughter), and he was radiant over the very great achievement which the Liberal Government had succeeded in accomplishing in Albania. They had induced the Sultan, at their instance and their instigation, to slaughter some hundred Albanians for the purpose of delivering over a piece of Albanian territory to masters whose faith was repellent to the Albanian people, and whose Government they had good reason to detest. (Hear, hear.) It is a great achievement for the Liberal party, that great champion of nationalities all over the world. (Cheers and laughter.) We learn from Lord Granville's speech that when he failed by mere persuasion to induce the Sultan to execute this heroic deed he devised an idea in which the Government of Russia heartily sympathized—that of a raid on the port of Smyrna, and that this threat extorted from the Sultan that promise which he, we are bound to admit, very loyally executed the other day. But the threat never came to anything, because his more prudent allies, Austria, Germany, and France, so he tells us, utterly refused to embark in the enterprise in which Russia and England were engaged. (Laughter and cheers.) From this narrative of Lord Granville's, the European concert will, I think, be known for the future as an arrangement under which England does the work of Russia so far as the more prudent Governments of Austria, Germany, and France will permit. (Laughter.) Lord Granville is good enough to say that, in opposing the cession of Dulcigno, we have acted like a man who dishonoured his own note because it had been indorsed by his rival. I am sorry to have to correct the inaccuracy of that representation. It occasionally happens that when a note or bill falls into thoughtless hands they alter the figures which it contains (laughter); and when that incident occurs the person who originally drew or accepted the note is very apt to object to pay it. (Cheers and laughter.) Now that is precisely what has happened in our case. We never wrote the cession of Dulcigno across any international obligation whatever. (Cheers.) I need not say that I do not suggest for a moment that Lord Granville is capable of inserting fictitious figures into a note, any more than I have any doubt that he would be incapable of suggesting that I dishonoured an obligation that I had signed; but I desire to point out that the simile which

he has suggested leads inevitably to the conclusion which I have stated to you. (Cheers.) I was sorry to notice from some phrases which fell from Lord Granville, if they are correctly reported, that he still meditates enterprises of the nature of that prospective raid on Smyrna on behalf of the claims—the so-called claims—of Greece. I earnestly trust that he has been misreported, and that that is not the case. Let it be clearly understood that any forcible action in defence of the Greek Claims is not in accordance, but in direct contradiction with the Treaty of Berlin. (Hear, hear.) Whenever the Plenipotentiaries at the Congress meant that a provision should be obligatory, they distinctly made it a part of the Treaty. Then it became discretionary on the part of any Powers signatory to the Treaty, according to their own views of prudence and of national interest, to support such a provision by force of arms or not, as they should think fit. But in the case of the Greek Claims they carefully and ostentatiously departed from the language and manner of the provisions of the rest of the Treaty. They made no provision whatever. All they did was to record that six out of the seven Powers assembled at the Congress suggested a certain generally defined settlement, and offered their good offices to carry it into effect. It was impossible to state in a more definite and distinct manner that the Plenipotentiaries at Berlin had in view a diplomatic and pacific solution of the Greek Question, and resolutely put aside the possibility of any forcible interference. (Cheers.) I earnestly trust, therefore, that the Government will not act on the hint apparently dropped by Lord Granville, and will not enter into a crusade and light up the flame of war on behalf of the very shadowy and unsubstantial claims of Greece. Surely they have done enough to fulfil the pledges of the Liberal Party, after the fashion in which they are usually fulfilled. As champions of nationalities they have slaughtered the Albanians who desired to defend their country. As maintainers of the Berlin Treaty, they have foisted into it a provision exactly the opposite to that which it actually contains. As maintainers of international law, they have projected a buccaneering expedition to seize the port of Smyrna. (Cheers and laughter.) Surely they have done enough, and now they may suffer this Eastern Question and the East of Europe to rest in peace. We have heard enough of that question for the last few years. It has disturbed commerce and interfered with the relations of the European nations, and the time has surely come when at least we may say that the responsibility will fall with tremendous weight upon the shoulders of any Power or of any Government which of its own accord lights up afresh the baleful fire of controversy and of discord. (Cheers.) But, notwithstanding Lord Granville's language, I have hopes that foreign affairs will pursue a more peaceful course, and that he will recognize the necessity of leaving the Greek Question to diplomatic negotiation. If only Greece and those who support her would recognize that the country of the Albanians cannot now, after what has passed, be safely interfered with, and that any settlement that is made must be in a friendly spirit, and must be confined to the

region of Thessaly, where the Greek population has an undoubted predominance, I have hopes that this dangerous question will come o a peaceful and harmless issue (cheers) ; and we have the more chance of it as the Government have very much more serous matters to consider nearer home. (Hear, hear.) I think that since the condition of affairs in Ireland assumed its present aspect there has been a marked inclination on the part of Liberal statesmen to abandon the duty of preachers of good government abroad. (A laugh.) The retort of "Physician, heal thyself" falls too aptly and too readily to justify or encourage any such attitude on their part. Now the Government have come to the conclusion that they do not intend to make any special provision for the good government of Ireland or for the abatement of the terrible anarchy which now prevails there for at least six or eight weeks to come, and they do it on the ground that remedial measures of some kind are necessary at the same time that any coercive measures are introduced. We are told that the land system of Ireland has broken down. Well, the land system of Ireland was entirely revolutionized, and put on a wholly new basis by Mr. Gladstone ten years ago (laughter) ; so that if anything has broken down it is the experiment which he began in 1870. Before that date the object of every statesman who had to deal with Ireland was to encourage the Irish people to the utmost to emigrate and leave room in a land that was no longer adequate to support so large a population, and in that way to bring to Ireland, as had been brought to many other countries, a renewal of prosperity and progress. In 1870 Mr. Gladstone deliberately reversed that policy. He did all he could to encourage the people to remain. Ten years have passed away, and we see that Ireland is in a far worse state now than when he began. (Hear, hear.) But these remedies which are to precede the re-establishment of good government in Ireland are no light and easy matter which will be settled in one discussion. I earnestly hope that they may be settled quickly, because neither the interests of the landlords nor the interests of the tenants in Ireland can brook any long delay. Still, it is impossible to close our eyes to the fact that they involve questions of a most difficult and complicated character, and that much discussion may be necessary before an issue from those difficulties can be found. We hear all kinds of proposals for cutting a bit here and a bit there out of the landowners' rights. I am not going to discuss them now. I hold that it is the business of an Opposition to consider fairly all measures that are placed before it, and, after consideration, to make those criticisms which their principles and their views of public policy may suggest ; but when I am asked to wait for the restoration of good government in Ireland until certain remedies are applied, I must ask in return how far it is probable that at any early period those sufficient remedies can be devised. (Hear, hear.) Now, with reference to those schemes for diminishing the landlord's rights I will only make this observation. If you take money's worth from a man by Act of Parliament without giving him money in return, you are guilty

of that species of robbery which in States is called confiscation; and if you are guilty of confiscation you not only frustrate and break that moral law upon which the prosperity of all States reposes, but you repel and drive away those owners of capital by whose action alone it is possible that any sufficient succour can be brought to the suffering Irish people. (Hear.) I conclude, therefore, that any measure of confiscation, be it in a small degree or be it in a large degree, will not pass Parliament and will not be sanctioned by the English people. (Cheers.) Well, if you must pay money for money's worth you will have to consider the amount of money you will have to pay. If it is little, will it satisfy the vast elements of disorder which have reduced the west of Ireland to a state of anarchy? If it is large, what will the taxpayers of this country think? (Hear, hear.) We are told that the establishment of peasant proprietorships is the remedy which is to save Ireland. Far be it from me to say a word against the class of peasant proprietors, or, as I should rather prefer to use an old English word, the class of yeomen. (Cheers.) No one who values the traditions of this country —no one who prizes the glories she has won or the liberties she has secured, will speak lightly of that class, by whose co-operation mainly those great things were done. (Cheers.) I will express now, as I have always expressed, my deep regret, that in the action of economic causes that class of yeomen possessing each his own small property, has become smaller in number than it used to be in those brilliant periods of our history. (Hear, hear.) But regret that it has been so is separated by an enormous distance from the proposals which assume that it is in the power of Governments or of Legislatures to restore them. You can no more act against the operation of great economic laws than you can act against the laws of the weather (laughter); and much as I should rejoice if it were possible to establish such a class, gladly as I should co-operate in any measures which should have a reasonable tendency to that end, I do not believe that any action which the Government can take here or in Ireland will produce the result which I hold to be desirable. It is said that there should be more land available for peasant proprietors. I have heard various suggestions which have been made for the purpose of encouraging this state of things. Some people speak of large measures. Mr. Bright, I think, spoke of 10 or 20 millions which he told us had been expended by England on the Afghan war—a point on which he made a slight mistake, because England did not pay any of it (laughter and cheers); and that he would like to expend that sum upon the purchase of properties for the peasantry in Ireland. The only question I have to ask upon that point is, What is there in the Irish labouring man or small farmer that makes him differ from the English labouring man or small farmer? (A laugh.) It would be most desirable, most delightful, if there was money enough in the Imperial treasury, to buy a bit of land for every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom; but if that be impossible, I cannot see the principle upon which taxes raised from the whole country

are to be applied to buy land for the benefit of the Irish peasant, and not of the English peasant. The only difference I can see between the two classes is that the English peasant is an honest man and does not break the law, while the Irish peasant in the disturbed districts does not satisfy either of these conditions. (Laughter and cheers.) I do not think the resources of the Treasury would be expediently employed in rewarding those who break the law and neglecting those who keep it. (Cheers.) Well, some people will tell you, "Get rid of settlement and entail, and you will get peasant proprietary at once." I am sure there must be some magic in those words "settlement and entail," because whenever there is a bad harvest you hear persons say, "Agriculture is very bad; but only abolish settlement and entail, and it will revive;" and whenever there is uproar in Ireland, it is said; "It is very desirable that these uproars should be put down—abolish settlement and entail." I can only account for the strange use of these talismanic words by supposing there are a great many people who agree with a learned friend I once met, who believed that settlement is a contrivance by which people are prevented from selling their land. This is a very common and general delusion. It might have been true 50 years ago; according to all modern settlements it is not true now. (Hear, hear.) If any man tells you that by the abolition of settlement and entail people who now cannot sell their land will in any considerable numbers be able to sell it in future, do not believe him—he is ill-informed on the subject on which he speaks. I speak as one holding land in strict settlement. But if I were in the condition—in which I am happy to say I am not—of having a property of Irish land, I could, under my settlement, sell every acre of it; of course, on the improbable assumption that I found a purchaser. (Laughter.) The only thing that settlement does is this: it allows a man to sell his land or his securities just as he likes; but he must reinvest the capital either in land, mortgages, or Consols, or some other safe security. The only thing that settlement does is to prevent a man spending the capital on himself. It is a very simple matter. When two people marry, if they have any fixed property at all, be it land or money, their friends generally insist that it should be so settled that the husband shall not be able to get rid of it in his lifetime nor his son during his minority, and that in that way a security shall be provided against the possibility of either the wife or the children being thrown penniless upon the world. (Hear, hear.) It is a mere arrangement for securing wives and children who may become widows and orphans against the possible effects of the husbands' extravagance. If you abolish it, I do not believe as a fact that any considerable amount of land would be thrown upon the market, because, happily, people who waste their means in riotous living are not very common among us. But it would introduce an amount of insecurity in marriage and family relations which would infinitely outweigh any advantages which can be expected to result from it. I have pointed this out because these talismanic words are used again

and again, as if by abolishing settlement and entail you could provide peasant proprietors for all the disturbed districts in Ireland. Do not believe such folly. The difficulty in providing peasant proprietors is to be found not in the land, but in the persons who are to buy it. In order to buy land two persons are required, the person who is to buy and the person who is to sell. (Hear, hear.) There is plenty of land in the market, both in England and in Ireland. Sellers are without prejudice, and would sell as readily to small purchasers as to large. (Hear, hear.) But the purchaser is the person wanted. In Ireland, he has seldom the money to purchase, and in England, if he has got it, he is far too sensible to invest it in land. (A laugh.) I have dwelt a little upon this point, but it is because I wish to impress upon you that in respect of this matter and in respect of all other remedies which are offered to you for the solution of the Irish Question, whatever their value, they are extremely complicated, and there is great danger that time may be taken up in their solution, and time in this matter is the one thing essential. The outrages in Ireland are proceeding in their unabated course. Lord Granville tells us that they are not so numerous or heinous as they were at some other period that he mentions. But he does not give sufficient attention to the fact that it is not the number or the heinousness of these outrages which really constitutes their importance. It is their steady direction to the attainment of a single end, their subordination to the views of a particular society and particular organization. (Hear, hear.) Their object is the subjugation of the localities in which they take place. When that subjugation is accomplished the object of the outrages is attained, and it is not from mere cruelty that they will be continued. The truth is that there are two Governments in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) You have the ostensible and showy Government, which maintains a show Chief Secretary and a show Lord-Lieutenant (laughter), which discusses, and meets, and hesitates, and does not act (hear, hear) ; and you have, on the other side, extending over all the western counties of Ireland, another government, diametrically the opposite in all its characteristics to the ostensible Government against which it stands. (Cheers.) It is secret; it acts with a definite purpose ; it betrays no signs of distraction or division; it is determined in its policy and unrelenting in its decrees (cheers); it operates, if necessary in extreme cases, by assassination, in more common cases by torment and torture of various kinds, by cruelty on dumb animals, by the destruction of property. But, whether by extreme or by moderate measures, it operates on a distinct, certain, steady system; and it operates with success. (Cheers.) We are told by Mr. Bright that force is no remedy. The occult government of Ireland, at least, is not of that opinion. (Cheers.) They find that for the matters for which they desire a remedy force is a very efficient and complete weapon. (Hear hear.) And as time goes on their power to use it spreads further and further. We hear every day of new districts and new counties brought under their control. The truth is that in most countries, and certainly in Ireland, allegiance is to the strong.

There are numbers of people who are very willing to serve the established Government as long as the established Government exists and can defend itself, but who are not prepared to be martyrs for those who will not fight for themselves; and so misrule and disorder go on, and the part of Ireland which is subject to the Queen diminishes and the part of Ireland which is subject to this bold conspiracy increases. (Loud cheers.) Now, there can be no peace, no return to prosperity in Ireland until the real, the legitimate Government of the Queen has overcome and destroyed this occult government that disputes its power. (Hear, hear.) And that is why time is of such intense importance. If, six months ago, timely and vigorous measures had been taken, all these strong measures now spoken of would have been unnecessary. I was struck by the extremely simple appeal that Mr. Chamberlain made to the rulers of disorder in Ireland. He said, "How is it that during six years, during the rule of our opponents, you never raised a finger, and now when we come into office you promote disorder and anarchy?" He did not stop to give himself an answer (a laugh), but the answer is because in the rule of his predecessors this anarchy would not have been allowed. (Loud cheers.) Six months have passed and another six months will pass before any attempt at an efficient remedy will be applied, and so rapidly does the evil increase and so quickly are people persuaded that the Queen's Government has lost its power, and that the only potentates they need satisfy is this secret conspiracy which rules with anarchy, that I fear that when another six months has passed there may be no remedy remaining short of those extreme measures which we all of us dread to contemplate. (Hear, hear.) It may well be that if this philanthropic dawdling goes on the English people will be placed face to face with the alternative that they must either subjugate Ireland or separate from her. (Loud cheers.) Such an issue is too horrible to contemplate, and it is the fear that into such an issue we may be driven that urges us to protest with all the energy of which we are capable against the indolent and timid policy which Her Majesty's Government are pursuing. (Hear.) Do not imagine that I set myself beforehand against any legislative boons, if such be possible, that may be offered to the people of Ireland. I will not determine their value before I see them. It is our duty to consider with the utmost care and respect any remedy by which the statesmen who are intrusted with the government of this kingdom think that for the future this terrible discontent may be avoided. But remember this, that if you permit the disorder to continue in the hope that you will have time to produce your remedial measures, you run the danger of persuading the people that your offers are only due to the terrors they have inspired (hear, hear), and they will consider what you propose merely as an instalment of that which by further pursuit of violence and outrage it will be possible for them to obtain. (Hear, hear.) Remember you must face the fact that there is a certain proportion—I trust not a majority—of the people of Ireland who are profoundly opposed to the continuance of the connection

between Ireland and this country. Be their numbers large or be they small, of their existence there can be no doubt. They are utterly disaffected. If you intend to meet and conquer them you must do so by a policy as decided, by a resolution as unflinching, as their own. (Cheers.) There is no hope that in their present state of excitement they will accept any remedial measures as anything else but a tribute to their power. If you would give remedial measures a fair chance, if you would have a hope of their accomplishing their soothing and beneficent effect, you must begin by repressing with a strong hand the disorder which now prevents any reasonable terms being listened to by the population. (Hear, hear.) If you would have a restoration of tranquility and progress for Ireland, you must adopt such a policy as will teach the peasantry of the disturbed districts that their condition will not be amended by violence and crime. You must impress upon them that their best hope is in the restoration of the supremacy of the law. If you adopt an opposite policy, if the Government, the Executive, and the Legislature adopt such measures as will induce the ignorant peasantry to believe that the possession of other men's goods is the reward of breaking the law, of dishonesty to contracts, of repudiating the engagements they have entered into, of oppressing the rest of the labouring population among whom they live, then there will be for many a long year to come no hope of restoring peace or prosperity to Ireland. (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

Mr. BALFOUR, M.P., proposed "The Army, Navy, and Reserve Forces," to which

Colonel NORTH, M.P., responded.

Mr. BARNETT, formerly M.P. for Woodstock, proposed the toast of "The Houses of Lords and Commons."

The Earl of JERSEY responded for the House of Lords.

The Right Hon. E. GIBSON, M.P., in responding for the House of Commons, said—My lords and gentlemen, it affords me very great pleasure to be permitted to take part in the proceedings of this evening, and that I, member for an old University that is known or called no longer by any the "Silent Sister," find, in this large and overflowing audience, representatives of the hope and pride of the great University that is so near. I do not think it necessary to say much in returning thanks for the assembly of which I have the honour to be a member. The House of Commons has a great history, it has great traditions ; and with all its faults and all the reflections which have been cast upon it of recent times, I believe it will ever remain dear to the English people. (Cheers.) We have been summoned together; we shall very soon meet for the despatch of urgent and important business, and I speak what I believe is the common opinion of the country when I say that never did the members of the House of Commons find it their duty to attend in their places for a Session so important and so likely to lead to grave and momentous issues. It will be the duty of the House of Commons, when it meets in its high function as the grand inquest of the nation, to consider and

examine the great topics so powerfully brought before you by Lord Salisbury to-night. On one of those topics it is now my duty to make a few observations. Unfortunately, the topic is not a pleasing one. It is one of profound, acute, and painful interest to me as an Irishman, but it is no less to you generous, intelligent, thoughtful Englishmen, a subject of deep and keen anxiety. I am sure that you are anxious to consider the case of Ireland in a broad and generous spirit, remembering that in the country there are portions of it that are free from all taint and agitation and crime, and that there are amongst your Irish fellow-subjects many who are as true as you are to the cause of Queen and country. (Cheers.) But true it is that now in Ireland there is in too many districts of rapidly widening extent an absolute reign of appalling terror, and if there is one part of my noble friend's speech that I could utter a single word of criticism upon it would be this, his statement that the agitation is occult and secret. One of the most dangerous and appalling symptoms is that it is open and daring; there is no clandesticity in its action; it flaunts itself before the public opinion of the Empire and laughs in the face of the Government. At the present minute in at least two counties in Ireland—Mayo and Galway—the reign of terror is so complete that it is no longer necessary for outrages to operate to secure it. English law is dead in those counties. The only law that prevails in those counties is the law of the Land League—the law of terror—and no one ventures in those counties to endeavour to assert a legal right; no one ventures to put forward a legal claim. Lord Salisbury used the only expression that is possible to describe this state of things when he said it is absolute, complete, and unqualified anarchy. I am aware of what is suggested in the press, and what I suppose we shall have to listen to in Parliament, that the excuse for the action of the Government lies in some ridiculous and misleading statistics—that, forsooth, because there are not many murders now, because in times past in disturbed districts there had been more murders and outrages, that is a circumstance which is to mislead public opinion and blind the mind of Parliament as to the significance of the position. Threats, and what are known as Whiteboy visits, are so familiar to me and Irishmen living in Ireland that I hardly know what to tell you—that I scarcely know how to cause quiet England to realize the state of things in Ireland. The offences that are committed and the threats that are made are levelled at all without regard to sect, class, creed, or party. Cattle are maimed and stabbed, and outrages, some of them great and some of them small, continue until the reign of terror and until the progress of agitation has developed and strengthened itself, and compelled submission at the present time in many parts of Ireland. English law, your law, my law (hear, hear)—the law of every loyal man (hear, hear)—is openly scorned, despised and defied, and these things are known to the Government (hear, hear)—and if they say they do not know them their ignorance is more than criminal.

(Cheers.) You know the new term that has crept into the language—"Boycotting." I am not going to dwell on the incident that has brought that word into the language, because you are all familiar with it. "Boycotting" means a decree of that irresponsible agitation, to the effect that a man is to be isolated as if he was "afflicted with a loathsome disease"—these words are their own, not mine—that no shopkeeper shall supply that man with goods; that no smith shall shoe his horse; that no herd shall tend his cattle, no servant wait upon him, and that if he does not submit and leave the country he may literally die for want of food. (Hear, hear.) And this system is going on and spreading. Lately in one of the counties of Ireland a clergyman going home at night met some people on the road. They asked him whether he belonged to the League, and when he said he did not they asked him if he would subscribe, and the result was he was knocked down and beaten simply because his replies were negative. You can realize something of a state of things that exists openly in Ireland when I tell you that a smith dare not put a shoe on the horse of a man who has incurred the hatred of the Land League. That is one form of "Boycotting," and one that is well known in Ireland, as well known as anything you could mention; but there are other forms. If a tenant pays his rent he, too, is "Boycotted," if the Land League has declared that in his district the tenants are not to pay. If a tenant, able and willing, pays the whole rent when a decree has gone forth that only a certain proportion should be paid in his district he is "Boycotted." (Shame.) A shopkeeper who had come under the ban of the Land League by supplying goods to a man who has incurred the displeasure of the Land League has people put at his shop door to prevent people going in, and if a farmer has come under the ban of the League a bellman is sent through the market to warn people not to buy his cattle, and now in some districts it is stated that the Land League issue tickets to farmers and shopkeepers, and no business intercourse is permitted with persons unprovided with such tickets. Many have to take them against their will for protection or to enable them to carry on their livelihood. Latterly the system has been brought home to the Government. Why, they have "Boycotted" the Government (cheers and laughter), and with success, for the last 10 days. There was a farm at a place that some of you who know geography well (laughter) may possibly have heard of; it is called New Pallas; and it became necessary, in consequence of a terrible outrage, that an iron hut should be sent down there for an extra police force. Now, this farm is only two or three miles from New Pallas Station, and the iron hut for the constabulary went down all right to the station, but there it has remained for the last 10 days; for the entire resources of the British Empire, with the police, and the army, and the entire power of the Executive Government, have been unable to get an ass and cart to carry it to the farm. (Great laughter.) Do not for a moment imagine—and it is a mistake that one might readily fall into if you merely read Radical

speeches—that this is in the slightest decree limited to landlords. It is nothing whatever of the kind; it effects as much tenants, shopkeepers, and artisans as landlords, and it is ruining the country. At a place called Scariff the Board of Guardians in a poor district had to refuse a loan of £32,000 because the present state of Ireland within the last few months rendered it impossible for them to accept money. Every one who has the slightest acquaintance with the country knows that we in Ireland have had a harvest far better than you have had here, a harvest the like of which has not been known in the country for 30 years. All admit it and should glory in it. Well, this should be a time when all classes in Ireland should enjoy an equal prosperity, the farmers, the landlords, and their labourers; and yet we all know that the labourers in the coming year may suffer the greatest wretchedness and destitution because this agitation has paralysed labour. (Cheers.) This state of things I have mentioned would be a disgrace to any country, but it is a disgrace and a menace to our Empire. The Government have trifled so long with illegality that now illegality calmly and audaciously trifles with the Government. (Cheers.) There have been lately a good many Cabinet meetings, which we regarded with a certain amount of interest, "Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi." While the Cabinet were at sea the loyal subjects of the Queen were left without protection, and when our suspense came to an end and we learned the result you cannot imagine the state of anxiety and the state of indignation that existed when it came to be known in Ireland. There appeared to be absolutely no justification for the decision of the Cabinet, which amounted to this, a decision to remain undecided. (Laughter and cheers.) Remember that they embarked in a series of Cabinet Councils which, according to popular report, was to consider the anxious and alarming state of Ireland. Now—and I assert what cannot be gainsaid, that the state of Ireland has not improved; nay, that it has grown worse, and that, as far as any one can now judge, Ireland is steadily growing worse at the present time, and in the face of that which must be known to the Government, which is known to every body in Ireland, and is not denied in the press—the decision of the Government is that they will at present do absolutely nothing. (Shame.) The only way I can put the Government policy is this—It is very like a decision that would "let things slide." Their policy seems to be one dictated by feebleness or cowardice, and to have no purpose whatever, except to postpone decision or to ignore responsibility. (Cheers.) Now, I am unable to see myself—looking at this with any intelligence I possess—I am unable to see what is the excuse of the Government, or how they will manage to defend their inaction when Parliament meets in this matter. (Cheers.) It is suggested that it is reasonable that there should be time to formulate a Land Bill. (Laughter.) I don't deny that this is an important matter; but there are other matters far more pressing that require immediate decision. (Hear, hear.) The Land Bill I suppose they are considering, and I suppose we are to have a Land Bill. It is unreasonable to ask any

Opposition to guess what the Government measure is, and speculatively to criticise it or give it a half promise of support. I don't think it is reasonable to expect that of an Opposition. All that I think is reasonable is to ask an Opposition to enter into Parliament in a critical Session with a mind that is not a *non possumus* mind. I think it is fair—I am prepared to do it myself—to give a fair and reasonable consideration to any just and reasonable proposals that the Government may submit to Parliament based upon the evidence taken by the Royal Commissions entrusted with that duty. That, I think, is fair and reasonable. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Russell has formulated a series of propositions. (Laughter.) I don't know whether they are irresponsible or a pilot balloon for the Government (renewed laughter) ; it is hard to know. They rather come up to the Radical view that whatever is is wrong. (Cheers.) It seems to me that Mr. Russell's propositions are more or less based on his letters to the *Daily Telegraph;* and those letters are letters to be scrutinised most jealously and carefully, because they are partly inaccurate, partly exaggerated; they are partly highly and unfairly coloured, and they are altogether one-sided and *ex parte.* (Hear, hear.) Another circumstance to be borne in mind about those interesting letters and to be taken in connection with those letters is this, that Mr. Russell, when he was pressing the case of certain tenants, had two lines of figures, one the actual rent and the other what is called Griffith's valuation, leading to the inferences that the decision was against any one who charged those rents. Any one who understands the question or the real position of Griffith's valuation knows how fallacious and misleading such inference may be. In subsequent letters Mr. Russell himself appears to admit this; but, these, letters may not be read by those who have so drawn erroneous inferences. It has been asserted in the press and not denied by Mr. Russell that this crusade into Kerry was made in company with Mr. Dillon, one of the chosen apostles of the Land League ; and if anything was wanting to make me regard Mr. Russell's propositions with cautious criticism it is this, that they have commanded almost the assent and approval of Mr. Davitt. (Cheers.) I do hope that when Mr. Russell comes to collect, as all authors will do, his fugitive letters into a pamphlet (laughter), I hope he will at the end have an appendix, which will contain all the letters and statements published in contradiction and explanation of his charges which may act as an antidote to the letters of his own production. Now, whatever Bill the Government brings in—I care not how extreme it may be, I care not even if it was drafted by Mr. Chamberlain and amended by Mr. Bright (laughter)—there is this tremendous danger that the Government have to face, that most unquestionably from one end of Ireland to the other it may be believed that that bill has been prompted by agitation and conceded by cowardice. There is another danger before the Government, that, no matter how extreme their Bill, it won't have the effect of ending the present agitation, or terminating the present reign of terror, because the Land League has got so strong in its organization, has got so powerfully developed in the

country, that they now declare that they want no Bill because they find that by their own organized lawlessness they can get more than any law of the British Parliament can give them. Now, the Government have postponed the meeting of Parliament for five or six weeks. That is, of course, a compromise date—a compromise date that condemns themselves (cheers)—because if they are now able to decide that the crisis is so urgent that they must in January —a month before the usual time—summon Parliament, the very same force of reasoning should have induced them not to have deferred the meeting for an hour. (Cheers.) Why do they now in November decide that it is necessary to summon Parliament in January? Because the state of affairs is too urgent to wait for February. Therefore it is too urgent to wait until January, and as this urgency is not a matter of yesterday, it may well be that a month ago the Government should have called Parliament together. They are only sowing the wind which will be attended subsequently by the invariable whirlwind. (Laughter.) The country has waited patiently; so have the Opposition. They have given every fair indulgence to the Government in their foreign policy as well as their home policy, and nothing whatever has been done. Anarchy and revolution are steadily and firmly advancing in Ireland. That is the state of facts that has to be coped with now, and the decision to postpone the meeting of Parliament until January is regarded by the agitators as a kind of statement that the present state of affairs in Ireland is tolerable, and that there is nothing at present calling for immediate or urgent consideration. In other words, the decision to postpone, the decision to do nothing, is taken as an indemnity for the next five or six weeks. (Cheers.) This state of things is a scandal and a disgrace to the Empire; and yet the Government policy is to bow meekly before that scandal. When the House of Commons meets it will meet with the responsible grave duty of insisting that this crisis shall at last be dealt with. It will be the duty of the House of Commons, whether the Government are prepared or not, to insist that the first duties of the Government shall be fulfilled, that law and order shall be restored, that anarchy shall cease, and that the reign of terror shall end. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. HARCOURT, M.P., proposed "Success to British Agriculture."

Mr. CHAPLIN, M.P., responded, and

"The Health of the Chairman," proposed by Lord SALISBURY, brought the proceedings to a close.

THE

GOVERNMENT'S IRISH POLICY:

A SPEECH

DELIVERED AT REDDITCH, FEBRUARY 15, 1882,

BY

R. U. PENROSE FITZ GERALD.

DUBLIN:
HODGES, FIGGIS, & CO., 104, GRAFTON-STREET.
1882.

THE GOVERNMENT'S IRISH POLICY,

&c., &c.

If the people of Great Britain learn nothing else from the present unhappy state of Ireland, they must at least have had this lesson forced upon them, namely, that no matter how strong may be a Minister's wish to keep himself and party in power at all hazards—to allow for however short a space of time the law of the land to be overridden and rendered powerless, and the lawful government of the country to be superseded by another and a stronger government—which other or lawless government carries out its trials, sentences, and executions with vigour, promptness, and impunity—as the government of the Land League did and does—is a course fraught with the gravest consequences to the well-being of the State, and which even threatens its very existence.

I shall not claim your attention for any theories of my own; but I will, from the mouths of Liberal statesmen in authority, quote to you in what state Ireland was when the present Government came into power, and, with your permission, then endeavour calmly and truthfully to depict the present state of the country, and point out the causes that brought about a state of things unheard of during the last one hundred years in any nation having the smallest claim to be called civilized, or even humanized—a state of things when over three-fourths of Ireland the Queen's writ no longer ran; when one after another Her Majesty's Judges of Assize openly and with sorrow confessed that the law was impotent, justice impossible, and the terror complete;

when women had their hair dragged off and were carded; mothers with babies in their arms were fired at by armed gangs of black-faced ruffians, and their children mutilated in their presence; when murders for which no one was made amenable were of constant occurrence, and burning and houghing took place nightly.

In March, 1880, Mr. Gladstone, at Edinburgh, used these words with respect to Ireland:—"There is an absence of crime and outrage, with a general sense of comfort and satisfaction such as has been unknown in the previous history of the country." That is Mr. Gladstone's opinion of the state of Ireland after seven years of a Conservative Government. I could read to you other valuable opinions to the same effect, from Mr. Bright and others; but this one is sufficient. A few weeks afterwards, when Mr. Gladstone had become the head of the Government, he refused to renew the "Peace Preservation Act," as a measure absolutely uncalled for in the profound state of peace in which, in his opinion, Ireland then was. On March 8, 1880, the late Earl of Beaconsfield wrote a letter (I think it was to the Duke of Marlborough), in which he warned the Duke that "a danger scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine threatened Ireland," and that "an attempt was being made to sever the tie which binds Ireland to Great Britain."

I have quoted Mr. Gladstone's opinion of the state of Ireland as left him by Lord Beaconsfield's Government. I have quoted to you Lord Beaconsfield's opinion of the caution necessary to be observed in dealing with the disloyal and—I am proud to say, in the main—foreign and transatlantic elements at work in that island. And now, before going any further, let me once for all tell you that the tenants of Ireland—my countrymen—are not primarily responsible for the horrible state of things at present existing in that country. If I thought that the murders and outrages could fairly be laid at the door of the tenant-farmers of Ireland, I should not stand here to state it. It is because I hold the present Government—collectively, by its policy of inaction, and single members of it individually, by their ambiguous speeches and ill-timed inflammatory sentences—

morally responsible in a terrible degree for every black and atrocious deed that has been done, that I am desirous of removing the not uncommon idea that it is to the native barbarity of the Irish that these acts are attributable.

Never has a section of a civilized nation been so tempted, so cajoled, and so subtilely led into violence as have the landholders, or tenants, of Ireland by Mr. Gladstone and his party—owing, I am willing to believe, in a considerable measure, to their ignorance of that country. Now, lest you should imagine that I in any way overstate the reign of terror, and the absolute sovereignty of anarchy in Ireland, I give you the opinion of a great Liberal Peer, himself a large landowner in Ireland. He says, in a circular to the magistrates and people of the West Riding of Yorkshire, on the subject of subscribing to the Property Defence Association:—

"When a man is under the ban of the League, nobody may speak to him, nobody may work for him, he may neither buy nor sell, he is not allowed to his ordinary place of worship, or to send his children to school; the horses of those who are boycotted are not allowed to be shod, their cattle are mutilated, their property of every description is destroyed, their lives are menaced, and have often been taken. The absolute martyrdom which has been endured by many honest and loyal men in Ireland has hitherto been little known or appreciated by the public in England."

Let me here point out, and emphasize as strongly as I can, the crime for which those people are enduring this martyrdom, those mutilations and outrages. It is simply and solely that they have been loyal to the Queen (God bless her!), and to the laws and authorities of this realm; and have dared to remain faithful to their sovereign and country, rather than to join the side of the Jacobins who have overturned all law and all order, as a first step, as they have ostensibly set forth, to overturning the government of the Queen, and dismembering the Empire. That is their offence, and this is their punishment—a punishment if not sanctioned, at least apparently winked at, and certainly unchecked for nearly two years, by Mr. Gladstone and his Government. The demon of Jacobinism, when once let

loose, is, I am aware, difficult, most difficult, to exorcise; but cowardice and weak-kneed concession to it are not likely to be successful with a monster of such power. I will tell you what M. Taine in his "Conquest of the Jacobins," says of this creature, and I will specially ask the gentlemen of the Press to carefully record my words as being quoted from M. Taine, who is describing the Jacobin called into power in France in 1789; otherwise I shall probably to-morrow find myself reported as having used words of Mr. Gladstone, personally, that are in reality applied to the Jacobin in the abstract. "He is a mixture of strange contrasts—a madman who reasons, a monster with a conscience. Under the influence of his dogmatism and his pride he has contracted two deformities, one of the mind, the other of the moral sense. Nothing stops him; for, by inverting the order of Nature, he has depraved the fundamental conceptions of right and wrong; no light reaches the eye which mistakes blindness for second sight; no reason can touch the soul which calls barbarity patriotism, and places atrocities on the path of duty."

And here I say that I honestly consider that one sentence of Mr. Gladstone's, viz., "that the blowing up of Clerkenwell Prison wall brought the Irish Church question within the range of practical politics," accompanied as that terrible outrage was with the murder and maiming of men, women, and children, bears a load of responsibility for the present state of violence and outrage in Ireland, second alone to the direct appeals of the professional agitator. Remember, that was not the sentence of an unknown or obscure sedition-spouter; they were the words of a Cabinet Minister; they were the words of the man who himself brought in the Church Disestablishment Act, the Land Act of 1871, and now the Land Act of 1881: and as we know from the words of the Duke of Argyll, himself a member of the Cabinet, there was no mention of, no idea of, a Land Act for Ireland when the present Ministry first unfolded their budget of legislation. But, guided by the "Divine light" of murders, cardings, ear-slittings, and cattle-houghings, &c., they conceded to their allies of the Land League what those allies themselves call "an instalment of justice," and brought in

"the Land Act, Ireland, 1881," which, as a monument of ignorant, hasty, ill-considered legislation, will for ever remain an indelible blot on the records of the House of Commons.

I am most anxious not to be misunderstood on this head: any Act which had for its object the putting a stop to rack-renting and the possibility of incessant raising of rents—an Act, in short, for punishing bad landlords, would have had my most hearty approval; but a Government which brings in a Bill failing to make a distinction between bad and good landlords, a Bill which treats those men who for generations have spent whatever they had of capital, energy, time, or talent, in endeavouring to improve the status of their tenant in civilization, comfort, and education, in the same way as it treats those so-called landsharks who themselves, many of them absentees, raise their rents every two or three years, with absolute indifference to the comfort and well-being of their tenants—is not worthy of the name of Government at all. For the support of the Irish Party at the last general election, the Prime Minister had to pay three prices. First, the non-continuance of the Peace Preservation Act. Now let me tell you one of the provisions of this Act, given upon the face of Lord Beaconsfield's warning—it provides the power to put upon a parish, barony, or county, a sum, a large sum of money, as compensation to a widow or children for the murder of the husband or father. Without it, though you may get damages under the "Malicious Injuries Act" for a cow, a pig, a sheep, or even for their tails or tongues, you can get nothing for the murder of human beings, nor can you fine a district in which any such atrocious crimes as the murder of Lord Ardilaun's bailiff, or the roasting of Clahane, occur. The second price was the "Compensation for Disturbance Bill"; a Bill that carried out Messrs. Parnell, Biggar, and Dillon's idea of justice exactly, and made it unnecessary for any tenant to pay rent for two years, and impossible for the landlord to recover any of his income, though there was no clause exempting the poor unfortunate landlord from paying all his rates, taxes, charges, &c., during that time. It was simply a Bill to ruin the whole class called landlords in Ireland, in the shortest and surest manner. Gentlemen, one fact

which is within our cognizance is worth five dozen theories. Take my own case:—For a year and a-half I have not had one farthing of my ordinary income from rents of estates in Ireland, but during that time on each succeeding quarter-day I have had to pay, to the hour, taxes of all sorts, tithe, quit and Crown rents, and (oh! bitter mockery) income tax! on pain of immediate bankruptcy or pauperization by whatever means Her Majesty's Government thought fit. That is my own case, and that of hundreds of others, of the class hated by the Communists of the present day. Where is your much-vaunted Liberal justice and honour? Will no one show the people of England how they are being duped, misled, and betrayed, before it is too late? And the third price paid to sedition and rebellion was the Irish Land Act of 1881. But as it has been said, "what seems strange is, that a Government should first encourage public crime, then conspire during a lengthened period with the criminals to pass a measure of public plunder, and finally imprison those same criminals, on the ground that they are advocating public rapine."

And now one word as to the present state of the country. In working the detail of the late large and successful meeting of landlords in Dublin, I, while acting as assistant secretary, received numerous letters from gentlemen saying they much desired to be present, but that they absolutely could not find money to bring their wives and children up to Dublin, and that they durst not leave them alone in the country; these from gentlemen say (before a Liberal Government ruined them) of £1000 to £2000 a-year income! The numbers under police protection are increased. But what of that large class of unfortunates who, anxious to remain loyal and true to their Queen and country, have never had police protection (how I hate the word!) at all?—who have never had one quiet night's rest for two years—who, residing quite isolated, one or two miles from each other, no other man in the house, the remaining inmates being their wife and children, and perhaps one servant girl, five miles from any police station, seven from their landlord's or any other large house, having been more than once visited by the Land League

black-faced police (always from ten to twenty armed men), dragged out of bed, had shots fired over their heads, their whiskers shaved off with sheep-shears, and such like *mauvaises plaisanteries;* who have seen the stacks burned and the houses fired into of many of their neighbours who declined to join the League, and also, apparently for party purpose, have been for two years left naked to their enemies by the so-called Government of Ireland? Put yourselves for one moment in the position of one of these men. I know of instances where some of them have gone to their landlord, and said, "Sir, we come to you, whose father before you, and you, have been our friend, adviser, and landlord, and we ask you, if in your honest opinion the Queen's Government can and will protect us if we remain loyal, and refuse to join the League; we have been many of us assaulted at night, and visited and threatened; this is the second year; two winters of this feeling of terrorism for our children and wives is too much; we are most desirous to remain as we have been for generations, true and loyal citizens; but if you can't say that you think the Government *can* and *will* protect us—have we your leave to pay our subscriptions, and join the League and be safe?" Now, put yourself in the position of the landlord; he knew the Government neither would nor could protect them; he could not advise them to join an illegal, rebellious society while he held the Queen's Commission of the Peace; and he knew that if he advised them to remain loyal, their blood would be on his head. He was prevented by the Government from arming and patroling the district himself—and if he had resigned his Commission, and then advised his tenants to take their own course, he would have given some reason for that untrue and brutally applied epithet of *coward*, which the Prime Minister has in his wisdom and power used against the Irish landlords!

Tell me, further, what share of the blame attaches to those unhappy countrymen of mine who have had (nearly in so many words) said to them by England's Prime Minister, "by murder and outrage you have got the Irish Church Act passed"; who have had said to them by Mr. Chamberlain, "without the Land League, the Land Act would never have

been passed" ? What share to the dupes ? And what share to the Ministers, who, step by step, have followed behind a rebellion, when they could at any one moment have stopped it by taking *two* steps, and so placing themselves in front of, instead of following behind it ? Let Mr. Gladstone tell us now, how many more murders and outrages on innocent men, women, and children are necessary before, in accordance with his more than half-made promise in his speech of Thursday last, he grants a National Legislature to Ireland, and hands over, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of the Land League Courts themselves those very loyal citizens whom he has dubbed *cowards* for not taking more active steps in suppressing the League and its members. For I know, and the Prime Minister knows, that in every single instance the so-called "County Boards" in Ireland would be simply the present local committees of the Land League; and the House of Parliament under a Home Rule Government will contain none but members, and tried and proved members, of the League. What state then would those loyal fools who have trusted to England's honour and England's justice be in ? Ruined, degraded, beggared, and driven out because they had not turned rebels in time.

What think you of an Englishman who gets up, in his place as Premier, in the House of Commons, and states that the present glorious supremacy of the law in Ireland has been "attained without the shedding of one drop of blood" ? Oh ! mockery, oh ! spite, oh ! wicked deception—"a single drop of blood" ! ! ! True, not a single drop of a murderer's blood has been spilt: possibly not one slayer or maimer of women and children has reaped the capital reward of his crimes. But what of the blood of the murdered victims, slaughtered because they were true to their Queen and to the laws of their country ? The lives of the honest, the loyal and true, do not count in the eyes of the Radical Minister of the present day, provided his great measure of legalized plunder is carried out without one gentle midnight assassin having been hurt, one black-faced shooter of children having lost one drop of his blood. Was ever more insulting jeer made at those who for two years have been trying to keep

faithful and true to Queen and country—"not one drop of blood has been spilt"? Where is the blood of the dozens of murdered victims of the months of December and January, victims to the cowardice and ignorance of this blood-sparing Government? Is no account to be taken of that? Have we come to this? Is this what all who remain steadfast to the English law and English rule are to expect?

The present Government can only govern on the principle of surrendering everything—particularly when it is the property of the peaceable, law-abiding citizen that is to be surrendered—provided only that enough violence, outrage, and murder accompany the demand. We have read the Land Act, called by a benevolent statesman not owning land in Ireland, "a full, comprehensive, and *generous* measure." How easy it is to be "*generous*" at another person's expense! I most willingly admit that great emergencies require great remedies; but I say further—the present Government, having had no idea of the necessity of *any* Land Bill at the beginning of this Parliament (see Duke of Argyll's statement), must have had it forced upon them by the murderous outrages so similar in many instances to that at Clerkenwell, the complete success of which has been admitted—which the rowdy Professional Agitator concocted and carried out. Now, strange as it may appear, it is no less true, that the very number of the murders and outrages in Ireland prove that which I am anxious to prove to you, namely, that the honesty and integrity of my countrymen stands at a much higher level than it is the fashion to represent. If they could have been led into dishonesty and breach of their promises and contracts merely by seditious and dishonest speeches and newspaper articles, ordering "no rent to be paid," &c., there would, as Mr. Parnell once said, have been "no *necessity* for murders."

The very number of outrages and murders that have been found necessary to drive the Irish tenants into dishonesty must for ever be a monument to the firmness and tenacity with which many of them clung to the paths of virtue through two terrible winters of temptation and threats, unprotected by the lawful Government of the country, and

neglected by all except their landlords, whom the Government refused to allow to protect them by force, and nightly visited by emissaries of the Land League, armed and ready for slaughter. I do not think there is any other country in the world in which it would have taken two years of threats —nearly every threat, even to that of life and limb, carried into execution, and the executioners always unpunished—to seduce from the paths of right dealing a whole class, such as the class of the tenant-farmers of Ireland. Yet this is the case with them—after two years of a weak-kneed, trembling Government allowing every conceivable kind of outrage—it is still "necessary" to maim and mutilate in order to enforce the law of the Land League.

God grant, gentlemen, that you in this country may never have so horrible a temptation, backed by so well-organized and apparently Government-allowed scheme of murder and arson, placed—aye and kept before you—for two whole years, to tempt you and your people into the lines of dishonesty. If anyone thinks that I have been unduly severe on the Government, perhaps he will remember that there was no reason why the steps taken in January, 1882, to put down violence, should not have been taken in January, 1881, when the number of murders, &c., was nearly as many as they are now. Everything that they have done *now* could equally well have been done *then*, and many of the lives and limbs of those so lightly valued by the present Government saved. You are doubtless aware that in the outset this Land Bill of which I have spoken steps in and defies and ignores all the laws of political economy. "The price of a thing is what it will fetch" is what we have been taught.

By the Land Bill the price of land is what three Sub-Commissioners, not, mark you, the three Head Commissioners who were appointed by the House of Commons, but three small-salaried men, of no note as valuators, and removable at pleasure of Government—mark this last, removable at pleasure of Government—choose to make it. In their hands lies the whole property of the Irish landlords—their income, their estates, almost their existence—certainly their existence in Ireland. Why, for such powers the highest

talent procurable in the realm should have been secured, and a salary equal to that of a Lord Chancellor would not have been too much, to secure skill and impartiality for so gigantic an enterprise and so delicate and important a Court—a Court with five times the power the Queen's Bench has—a Court with power to ruin, to fine, to make bankrupt or pauperize the whole caste of landowners in Ireland. And now having overridden the laws of political economy, what does this Liberal, Free Trade Government do? It deliberately forbids Free Trade in land, and makes it illegal to make any bargain of letting or selling between the man who has land to let or sell, and the man who wishes to hire or buy.

I want to protest against the improper and unnatural use of the word "fair rent," which has been attempted to be given to the amount put on a farm by these Commissioners. You may with truth call it a Government rent, or a judicial rent, or a legal rent—you have no right to call it a "fair rent." That alone is a fair rent which a man wanting to hire is willing to give to a man wishing to let in market overt. I am perfectly ready to admit that for high reasons of State there may be a necessity for the Government of a country to step in and say: "We must for the good of the many interfere with the free rights of sale or letting." There may be circumstances which render it even advisable that a Government should do so. But I say this, in such a case, in no country in the civilized world would the class which suffered from such Government interference with the free right of sale be allowed to be beggared and ruined. If in the interest of the State such interference with contract is necessary, the State should give compensation. The justice, fairness, and impartiality of the laws of England have, up to now, been the theme of every nation. When it was found necessary to abolish slavery, twenty millions of money were given as compensation, no small amount of which went—after many speeches from the present Premier, then a rising Member of Parliament—speeches marked then as now with persuasive eloquence and honeyed words of high morality and apparent justice—into the pockets of the Gladstone family, if not actually into that of the present Prime Minister him-

self. And are we worse than the slave-drivers of the West Indies? Are we who two Commissions—the Bessborough and the Devon—have, after long and searching inquiry, pronounced to be innocent of hardness, or cruelty, or undue exaction, to be plundered and fined, and in many cases absolutely ruined? and many of the unfortunate mortgagees, widows and daughters of squires, driven to live either in the workhouse or on public charity—and this through no fault of their own? This is no fancy picture and no exaggeration: I myself am aware of many such cases of beggared ladies and children. Mr. Chamberlain himself has said "he had'nt a word to say against the Irish landlords." Mr. Glalstone has said, "They" (the landlords) "have stood their trial and have been acquitted." Yes, and now they are being sentenced with the utmost rigour of party hatred, presumably because they have been acquitted. One of the means by which the Houses of Parliament were persuaded into passing this Act was a statement of the Premier, that "he did not anticipate it would lead to any reduction of rents in Ireland, and would render more secure the properties of the landlords"; but as soon as the Act is passed, we find Mr. Chamberlain saying, that "the Act will hand over the not insignificant sum of four millions of money from the pockets of the landlords to those of the tenants." If this is so (and at the present rate these unskilled Sub-Commissioners are going on, it will be a far larger sum), in the name of English justice and English honesty let it not be open and undisguised robbery.

If for State reasons money must be taken from the thrifty and loyal classes, and given to others, then if there ever was a case for compensation in some form or other it is this:—Give me one of three things! Give me my estate as my ancestors had it not many hundred years ago, without any tenants; and, if it is returned to me in the prairie state it once was, I can make four times the amount I now receive from rents; or give me the price of it, calculated say on the average such estates have sold for during the last twenty years, and let me be gone to some other country where there is some justice left, some chance for working owners of land, and where

security of property, on which alone is founded the wealth of nations, is not made a shuttlecock of by political parties; or give me back—and this is the alternative most dear to my heart—give me back the love and affection of my tenants which has been ours for centuries, till you filched it away with foul bribes and dishonest promises of plunder! By far the bitterest blow of all that falls on us from this Bill of pains and penalties against the old landlords of Ireland is the reflection that gone for ever is that strong feeling of mutual respect, confidence, and love that in many cases bound together the Irish landlord and the Irish tenant—gone, because the tenants have seen that the promises and threats of the Land League have been successful, and nothing succeeds like success;—gone, because the landlords opposed and set their faces against the League, and declared the law of the Land League should not be the law of the land; and now the tenants have seen every law and every demand of the "illegal Land League" made legal and binding by the Land Act of 1881, and the landlords abused by the national papers for not having sided with the people in the struggle; and jeered at by the Prime Minister of England for their cowardice in not having suppressed an association at whose dictation the English Parliament took from them (as a Cabinet Minister has said) four millions of their property, and gave it to their tenants.

And now, gentlemen, by what means is the advancing tide of Communism and rapine to be checked? By every means that infuses and spreads true political information—by every means that drags the mask off the face of the deceitful State policy of the present Ministry—by every means that can be taken to interest the great educated middle classes in England. In their honour and in their justice I have the most implicit confidence, and it is only when they are deceived by sounding phrases and brilliant word-painting effects that it is possible for a great national injustice to be done. The enemy is at your door; the silver streak that divides Ireland from England is very narrow, and the Communistic doctrines that have been for years successfully allowed by the Government to herald the approach of the

Land Act of confiscation in that island will, as sure as I stand here, be preached in this island, and the attack will be not on land, but on every species of property—mills, works, factories, stocks, &c. Let this and kindred societies bind themselves together, each man of them to use his utmost endeavours to let the truth be known, to stop the spread of false and immoral readings of the laws of Political Economy.

This is no time for sleep or idling; the liberties of England are being attacked in the gagging measures proposed for the Commons House of Parliament; the property of loyal Irishmen is being divided, and the idolatrous worship of one eminent dictator by the less educated masses of the people, who have nothing to lose by rebellion and anarchy, and to whose passions and prejudices his brilliant scholarship and sounding phrases rarely appeal in vain, has brought Ireland to a rebellion, and threatens England with the first step towards the destruction of her liberties. I warn you the danger is great, the danger is near; and I would that the voice of warning could be sounded from end to end of this land, in the hopes of saving you and yours from the frightful scenes that the policy of this Government has caused to be enacted in my unhappy country. Take care lest the independent thinkers and hard-to-rouse common-sense workers of England be caught napping—take care lest asleep within your orchards, the cursed juice of most seductive eloquence be poured by poisonous drops within your ear, and you wake up only in time to mourn the liberties of England, and cry, "Too late! too late!"

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SPEECH

OF THE

EARL OF DONOUGHMORE

IN THE

HOUSE OF LORDS

During the Debate upon the Address in reply to Her Majesty's gracious Speech, Jan. 6, 1881.

LONDON:
WILLIAM RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY, W.
1881.

SPEECH OF THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE.

My Lords,

It will be in your Lordships' recollection, that, in the month of October last, a deputation waited upon the Lord-Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary, with the view of laying before those authorities the state of things in Ireland. As the individual who had the honour of introducing that deputation, I venture to interpose between your Lordships and the other important items in Her Majesty's gracious speech, with a few words upon the subject which, as the noble Earl (Beaconsfield) has said, engrosses all our minds at the present moment. I cannot speak with the authority of the noble Duke (Marlborough), who filled with such dignity and ability the high position he occupied under Her Majesty's late Government; but I can at all events address your Lordships as one who has not been an inactive observer during the last few months, and who, in common with all peace-loving and law-abiding citizens, with every right-minded subject of the Crown who knew the true facts, has watched in shame and consternation the progress of events,

and the apparent helplessness of Her Majesty's Government to control them. It appears inconceivable, to anyone who pretends to any knowledge of Englishmen, that the great mass of the people of this country can have weighed and appreciated the state of things in Ireland—I mean the conditions under which we are now living, and have been living more or less since September. They are only now, and now I believe only partially, awakening to the truth that a revolution is seething at their doors. Had it been otherwise, things would have been different. I do not believe, had the state of Ireland been really understood by them, had they appreciated the true extent of the revolutionary reign of terror by which we have been swayed, that the enlightened people of this civilized country would have permitted the Cabinet to stand by with folded hands, while every function of government was slipping from its grasp into that of a revolutionary faction.

No, my Lords, it has not been known in this country. The secret has been carefully locked in the Ministerial bosom, and Ministers at least cannot deny that they had a full knowledge of the gravity of the crisis. I don't want to go back to the promises made in this and the other House of Parliament at the beginning of last session, to maintain the authority of the law, and to protect all the Queen's subjects in the peaceable enjoyment of their property and the exercise of their legal

rights. But I take my stand on the deputation that waited upon the Lord-Lieutenant on the 6th of October last. That deputation was received in private, and I will tell your Lordships the reason why. We numbered amongst us men of all creeds, and of all shades of political opinion, and we were desirous, in laying our views before the authorities, that the speakers should state their opinions freely and fully. But there were those amongst us who had statements to make, whose lives, had what they said been made public, would have been in imminent and constantly recurring danger. That was the reason the deputation was private. We were bound to respect what some members of the Cabinet call the "panic" of men who carried their lives in their hands. Well, the Lord-Lieutenant complimented us upon the moderation with which we had stated our case; and Mr. Forster, who followed him, fully concurred in our estimate of the situation. This is our view of it, as I took it down at the time, and as expressed at the meeting previous to the deputation.

"That a system of lawless terrorism prevails "over many parts of Ireland, more especially in "the Western portion—a system which is daily "increasing and spreading wherever the meetings "of the Land League take place.

"That under this system not only are the lives "of landowners, agents, and bailiffs, as well as "those of persons engaged in carrying out the

"ordinary process of the law, rendered insecure ; "but men of position and stake in the country "are intimidated in their magisterial and county "duties, while respectable and hitherto law- "abiding farmers and tradesmen are forced "against their will to join in combinations against "the rights of property and the maintenance of "order, or are otherwise subjected to a persecu- "tion which places their lives in peril, and is at the "very least aimed at bringing about their ruin.

"That a state of things is hereby created and "maintained which ought to be impossible in any "civilized country, enjoying the protection of a "responsible Government; that the attempts to "enforce the law have become a mockery, and "that the only passport to safety in many parts "of the country is obedience to the orders of "persons whose avowed objects are the carrying "out of a conspiracy against the rights of pro- "perty and the welfare of the Empire.

"The meeting was therefore desirous to impress "upon Her Majesty's Government the urgency "of losing no further time in taking such measures "as are clearly necessary for the protection of "life and property and the maintenance of law "and order, as it has been proved beyond doubt "that the law as it stands is insufficient to check "crime and outrage in the present crisis."

This is our estimate, the accuracy of which was admitted, and which involved a further admission

as to the inefficacy of the existing law. So much for the Irish Executive; but what does your latest addition to the Government say? Mr. Courtney, in his speech to his constituents at Liskeard, when he was fresh from a tour in Mayo and Galway, and had had an opportunity of judging for himself, makes the following remarks :—

"What kind of dislocation is it? It has come "to this, that in many parts of the West of "Ireland no man is free to do what he likes. "Everywhere you find men unable to do what "they have done, and would go on doing, in con- "sequence of the terror which is exercised by "the society which has sprung up among them."

And again further on he adds:—

"It appears to me that one of the most elemen- "tary aims of society is this, that the man who "gets up in the morning to go forth to his daily "labour shall do so without fear of molestation. "It is equally simple that the man coming home at "night and going to his bed shall have no fear of "midnight attack. And if it comes to this, that "a man against whom no charge can be made is "exposed in his daily life and toil to threats and "to injuries—is exposed to murderous attack by "night or to outrage by day—then I confess that "it becomes with me a serious reflection that, "whatever may be the work to be done in the "future, there is some work to be done in the "present."

Well, in October the terrorism was only partial, but it had spread from its original centre, and both the deputation at the Castle, and later on Mr. Courtney at Liskeard, spoke words of warning. I myself pointed out that it showed itself wherever the Land League placed its cloven foot. Mr. Courtney says:—

"You have to deal with a sort of brief mad-"ness. The people willingly live in peace and "quietness, but the madness has run among them "and will run further."

And those warnings have been fully realized. There is hardly a district in Ireland which is not inoculated with the disease. The arguments of the Land League are no doubt too strong for the ordinary passions of human nature, appealing as they do to the moral principles of the peasantry by the substantial prizes they hold out, while the roughs and the ratteners, armed with the revolver, the firebrand, the billhook, and the other insignia of terrorism, do the rest. But in spite of seductive arguments, there are hundreds and thousands of honest men in Ireland, who, were it not for the terrorism, from which they have no protection, would still act up to their principles. And this is one of the gravest charges the Government have to meet. They have undermined the morality of the people. They have driven honest men into dishonest courses. They have handed them over to the contamination of the desperado classes. Dr. Webb

puts it clearly in his very valuable pamphlet, "Confiscation or Contract," when he writes :—

"This population, like every other population, "contains its disaffected and its desperado classes, "and it is these that keep Ireland disturbed by a "smouldering civil war. It is these who at the "present moment are mutilating cattle, and assas- "sinating men, and wreaking their vengeance "upon women and young children. Any English- "man would smile contemptuously if anyone were "to describe the ratteners of Sheffield and the "roughs of London as the English people. But "that is the very mistake which he himself makes "whenever he begins to talk of Ireland. No, the "outrages which excite the horror and arouse the "indignation of the world are not perpetrated by "'the high-souled Irish people;' they are per- "petrated by the ratteners and roughs of Ireland."

Now, my Lords, I don't wish to waste your time with details—there are plenty of them, and he who runs may read—but I could bring your Lordships case upon case upon my own property, where there has not been for five-and-twenty years, I may say ever since the great famine, the slightest trouble or disagreement. There has always been the most cordial feeling. And I wish to say now, my Lords, that in my opinion, and in spite of what is passing, that friendly feeling subsists still. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman told his constituents at Stirling the other day, that there is not, and never

has been, any real sympathy between the Irish landlord and Irish tenant. This is incorrect. In the great majority of cases, the tenant looks to the landlord for advice and assistance, not only in his agricultural career, but in the incidents of his social life. Anyone who has read the letters in the *Times* from a Special Correspondent, which have been appearing lately, will recognize how largely this feeling exists. And what I have said of my own property, I may say of neighbouring estates. The district has enjoyed for many years a peaceful and quiet reputation. But look at it now. On the 5th of November last, the Land League came down with its satellites, and held a meeting in Clonmel; and now the organization is perfect and complete. It cannot be better described than it is by a friend and neighbour of mine—an assiduous magistrate, the Chairman of the local Board of Guardians, and one who has personal knowledge and acquaintance with almost every farmer in the district. This is what he says:—

"A law enforced by outrage and terrorism is "established in the country, and the law of "England is powerless or in abeyance. What good "then appealing to its forms for redress, or to "assert your rights? You can gain nothing, for "at this moment no bailiff can with safety to his "life serve a writ for the sheriff or a superior "court. Nine-tenths of the farmers are holding "back rents through fear and threats that they

" will be burnt out and beaten. I know many " such near here. Several have told me so, and " *have begged me not to ask for my rent* till all is " settled, which they confidently hope will be " soon after Parliament meets."

That is a true description of the state of things where I reside; but I should like to tell your Lordships, in order to show the power of this Land League, a case that came to my notice, and occurred in a different part of Ireland altogether. A friend of mine in the West told me that his tenants came to him a couple of months ago, saying they were prepared to pay their rent in full, and only awaited his order to do so. They acknowledged his liberality to them during the previous bad seasons, but stated that, notwithstanding what he had done for them, all their little savings had been swept away. They therefore asked him, not as a right, to consider their case—to give them, if he thought fit, some slight abatement. My friend considered the case, and finally made a reduction of 10 per cent., which was joyfully accepted; and the whole body of tenants paid, and went away in a high state of gratification, vowing that no power on earth would make them join the Land League. My friend left home for three weeks, and on his return found every one of those men enrolled in the League; and from those whom he had an opportunity of asking their reasons for joining, he had the stereotyped reply:

—" We have wives, children, houses, cattle, crops; " we cannot run the risk of being murdered or " beaten ourselves, of having our wives and " children ill-treated, our houses burned over our " heads, our stock and haggards destroyed." And I venture to affirm that, had the rent-day been but three weeks later, not one penny of rent would have been received.

But it isn't only the farmers who suffer ; it is every honest man, be he shopkeeper, farmer, or what you will. Traders cannot any longer get goods from wholesale houses on credit; their custom diminishes day by day; they have no security for their outstanding debts. The functions of the Landed Estates Court have practically ceased. Insurance Companies, and other lenders, will no longer advance money upon Irish real property. The officers of the law cannot perform their duties. Some are resigning their offices in despair. And we have, besides all this, the cardings, the Boycottings, the houghings of cattle, acquittals of guilty prisoners, undiscovered criminals without number, sacrilege and murder unpunished All this the Government have watched growing and have never stirred a finger. They stand convicted by the progress of events. This is the lesson they have taught the people.

" The lesson which the English Government has " conveyed to its Celtic subjects by its conduct " since last May, in the matter of the Irish rising,

"cannot be more pithily expressed than in the "three short English words, 'Do it again.'"

This, with a slight alteration in words, is taken from the opening paragraph of "Lessons in Massacre," an exposition of the conduct of the Porte in and about Bulgaria, by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., with the following motto :—

> "Away, with me, all you whose souls abhor
> The uncleanly savours of a slaughter-house
> For I am stifled with the smell of sin."

And how has this policy of the Government, as regards Ireland, been defended ? There are two modes of defence which have struck me particularly—one, by denouncing your Lordships' House in the matter of the Disturbance Bill; the other, by assigning a reason for the agitation which in my opinion, is as misleading as it is ill-founded.

The Prime Minister has told the country, that the rejection of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill by your Lordships' House was the *fons et origo malorum.* Well, I hardly think the proposition will bear investigation on the face of it, and your Lordships are not likely to forget that Mr. Gladstone's card has been over-trumped by Mr. Parnell. But I desire to remind your Lordships of what was laid down not once, but several times, in this House during the debate on the Bill, and, if my memory serves me right, in the other House

also. The mischief of the Disturbance Bill was complete, not when it was rejected by Lordships, but on theday that its principle was adopted by the Government. You proposed that contract should be violable, not only with impunity, but with advantage to the violator. You denied the principle, but you could not eradicate it, and it has ever since been the first article of the agitator's creed.

And now, my Lords, for the reasons, the objects of this agitation. The idea prevails among thinking men in England, that there must be some deep-rooted disease in the Irish system to cause all this tumult. Nothing of the sort. Anyone who has studied the subject must see that this cry about land is only raised as a means to an end. None of the arch-agitators, with one exception, have, or ever had, any concern with land ; their avowed object is not to reform the Land Laws, but to expropriate the present landowners, with the ultimate view of the dismemberment of the Empire. That is a part of the substance of the indictment brought against Mr. Parnell and his associates for conspiracy, and against the Government as accessories after the fact, at the Four Courts in Dublin by the Attorney-General for Ireland. It is not the cry of a majority that are discontented, but of a minority who are disloyal. Study the policy of the Parnellite party. Its first object was to render Parliamentary Government in England impossible as long as the Irish element remained; its next, to

drive out of Ireland, by making their existence there unbearable, those who were loyal to the English connection. It is on the surface in all their speeches. I need not remind your Lordships of the oft-quoted words of Mr. Parnell at Galway —"I would not have taken off my coat and gone "to this work, if I had not known that we were "laying the foundation in this movement for the "regeneration of our national independence." Or again at Cincinnati—"Let us not forget that this "is the ultimate goal at which all we Irishmen "aim. None of us, whether in America or in "Ireland, or wherever we may be, will be satisfied "until we have destroyed the last link which keeps "Ireland bound to England." The settlement of the Land Question is entirely distinct from this. This is a revolution, the primary object of which is robbery, the ultimate aim—separation.

My Lords, I said the Government was condemned by the progress of events. They are also condemned by the verdict of history. They are condemned by the operation of their own Westmeath Act, and, not to multiply instances, they are condemned by the experience of 1797 and '98. The analogy is perfect. For the Duke of Portland, read Mr. Gladstone; for Lord Camden, Mr. Forster; for United Irishmen, the Land League; for the introduction of French principles, American sympathizers. You have the Irish Executive asking for further powers, the Cabinet urging remedial

legislation. It is the old story over again. There is an unreasonable agitation, and what does the Government do? Instead of enforcing the law, it begins to think of legislation. And now, my Lords, you are to be asked to legislate. I don't wish to prejudge the question. I must, however, take this opportunity of correcting an error that fell from my noble friend the mover of the address (Lord Carington). He stated that, though there were many landlords in Ireland who were what are called "good landlords," they composed the minority of the class. My Lords, in this my noble friend has been misinformed. He will find on investigation, and by statistics which I hope will shortly be in his hands, that the contrary is the case—and those of your Lordships who are acquainted with the subject will recollect, that if the charge is ever brought specifically against any, it is chiefiy levelled against that comparatively small number who bought with a Parliamentary title from the Encumbered Estates Court. I said I did not wish to prejudge the question. I merely ask your Lordships to consider, Is this the moment for legislation? In the month of May, 1797, Lord Camden wrote as follows to the Duke of Portland:—



"You ask whether His Majesty should be "advised to accede to a concession which is made "the excuse of rebellion. *Rebellion must first be* "*overcome.*"

And further on—"I cannot conceal how melan-
"choly a presage I consider the system to which
"we appear to have been forced, of yielding to
"the demands of persons who have arms in their
"hands."

And the Government have asked us for sympathy. My answer to that is, show a little sympathy yourselves first. I have been unable to detect any sympathy with those gentlemen with small or moderate properties, say up to £5000 a year, who may be called the backbone of county society, and who at this moment do not know where to turn for a five-pound note. This is the Government sympathy; this is how it is shown. By the studious silence of your Secretary for War, during his progress through Ireland—where crime and outrage was being perpetrated before his eyes, and the murdered Lord Mountmorres, hardly yet cold, was lying in that deserted house, a reproach to Mr. Childers and the Government of which he was a member. Not a reproof, not a regret, not a word passed his lips. By the cynical indifference of the Prime Minister, when Captain Boycott prayed redress for the wrongs he had endured by your failure to perform your first duties. My Lords, in the long catalogue of crime and horrors, there is hardly any occurrence to my mind so damaging to the reputation of the Government as this case of Captain Boycott. He was the protomartyr of his class, which is now a large and

widely extended one. He was a living testimony of the lawlessness that existed; but not one attempt did the Government undertake to restore order, until they were forced to action by a handful of honest men, who refused to tolerate so glaring an abuse; and when he comes to you for redress, your leader wilfully misunderstands his plea, but condescends to tell him, now that he is done with and has no further interest in the matter, that "the law will be amended and enlarged." And, lastly, your sympathy is evinced by the fierce exultation of Mr. Bright, at the report that a large and hitherto influential class of his fellow subjects were running for their lives. My Lords, the time will, I hope, come when we shall look back upon 1880 in Ireland as a bad and horrible dream; but the memory of the Government that tolerated its atrocities will remain, stamped with the censure and the condemnation of a civilized age.

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PEACE WITH DISHONOUR.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE

HOUSE OF LORDS,

MARCH 31ST, 1881.

BY THE

RIGHT HON. EARL CAIRNS,

ON

The Arrangements made by Her Majesty's Government with the Boers in the Transvaal.

CORRECTED ON AUTHORITY.

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APRIL, 1881.

THE TRANSVAAL.

SPEECH OF EARL CAIRNS IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, MARCH 31ST, 1881.

EARL CAIRNS, in calling attention to the arrangements recently made by Her Majesty's Government with the Boers, said:—It is now nearly three months since Parliament met. During that time, owing probably to the pressure of other business, very little has been said of a subject which has nevertheless greatly occupied the public mind, the state of affairs in South Africa, and especially in the Transvaal. We were informed at the beginning of the Session, in the most gracious Speech from the Throne, that there had been a rising in the Transvaal, and that military operations were in progress for the purpose of suppressing that rising, and vindicating the authority of the Crown. After that we heard of successive disasters to the British forces. There had been before the end of the year an attack upon the 94th Regiment at Madder's Spruit; then in January the reverse at Laing's Nek; and in February, first the battle at Ingogo, and subsequently the defeat at Majuba. We then heard that reinforcements had been rapidly and energetically prepared and sent forward to retrieve these disasters, and that a General who had won his laurels in the East had been sent out to command the reinforcements and to co-operate with another General, hardly less trusted, who had already arrived on the scene. In these circumstances the spirit of the country was sustained. They put trust in the exertions which were being made, and they relied upon the assurance they had received from the Government that the authority of the Crown would be vindicated. We then heard that there were arrangements and negotiations in progress. The Government naturally had a right to decline to enter upon any discussion of those negotiations while they still were in progress, and, on the other hand, it would have been wrong to press the Government for any information at that stage of the proceedings. But still the public relied on the assurance they had received, and in this House we had obtained a still further assurance. The noble Earl the Secretary of State, when the subject was mentioned on the 21st of February, told us that "Her Majesty's Government are taking steps to procure a satisfactory settlement consistently with the honour of the British Crown." (Hear, hear.) As the

Speech from the Throne had announced that the authority of the Crown would be vindicated, so we understood that the Secretary of State desired to assure us that the honour of the Crown was involved in vindicating that authority. Then we received the information that the arrangements were concluded and that a peace had been made. The idea of peace and of a cessation of hostilities is always so welcome that we were disposed to hail with satisfaction the news of this arrangement, and of this peace, and we naturally imagined that, although the terms were not known, yet when they came to be known it would be found that they fully redeemed the promises which had been made by the Crown. (Hear, hear.) Her Majesty's Government have now laid upon the table the telegraphic papers connected with this arrangement. I do not know how much of the satisfaction which first was felt any longer remains. (Cheers.) Some details there are which still are wanting, and with regard to those details my object is to ask the Secretary of State to favour us with some information on matters on which we are left in doubt by the papers before us. But the leading features of the arrangement are clear, and although it may not be the time, until every detail has been supplied, for your lordships to pronounce any formal opinion upon the peace that has been concluded, still I think Her Majesty's Government have a right to know when the papers have been, as far as they have been, laid before us, what is the opinion which may be entertained by us with regard to this arrangement; and they would be entitled to say they naturally concluded, when so much information was laid before us, that we were satisfied with that which had been done when we expressed no dissatisfaction. (Hear, hear.)

I will ask your lordships to remember what the state of affairs was at the commencement of the Session. It was on the 20th of December that the affair which some people called, and not incorrectly, a massacre at Madder's Spruit took place. A portion of the 94th Regiment was on its march under the command of Colonel Anstruther. I do not stop, however, to consider at this moment the precise nature of the occurrence which took place, but your lordships remember that in the result some 70 or 80 out of a force of 157 were killed, and that several, if not all, of the officers were among the number. After this an appeal was made to the Secretary of State from the colony of Natal. Your lordships will find in the Blue Book which was presented to Parliament in February a communication which was made to the Secretary of State on the 29th of December through Sir George Strahan. A deputation of the Legislature of Natal and others requested Sir George to send to the Secretary of State a resolution by telegraph. It was in these terms:—

"A deputation, composed of 15 members of the Legislature and others, Mr Merriman spokesman, request me to send the following resolution by telegraph —: That this deputation, in common with the rest of South Africa, deplores the unhappy state of affairs now existing across the Vaal River, and ventures to urge upon Her Majesty's Government that, in order to effect a settlement of the differences which have arisen and to establish tranquility, it is desirable that some person acquainted with the feelings and opinions of the inhabitants of

South Africa should be appointed as a Special Commissioner to the Transvaal territory to enquire into and report upon the exact position of affairs, the feelings and wishes of those interested, and what arrangements would be most advantageous to the country and most likely to reconcile the inhabitants to the Government of the Queen; and the deputation would further respectfully suggest that the Chief Justice of the Cape Colony, Sir J. H. De Villiers, possesses in an eminent degree the qualifications required for such an office."

That was a proposal which at that time, I think, was not unnatural. It was one which might well have been entertained, and if this eminent person, who is said to possess the confidence of all the parties there, and who indeed is one of the three Commissioners recently selected, had been appointed at that time, it is possible that we might have been spared much of what has occurred. But the view of the Secretary of State at the time was different. He replied, by telegraph, on the 30th of December, to Sir George Strahan as follows:—

"Inform the deputation that, while fully appreciating their motives, we do not think the present moment will be opportune for sending a Special Commissioner to the Transvaal."

That was the opinion of the Secretary of State at that time. I think we shall find the ground of that opinion appearing again in the most gracious Speech from the Throne. The same motives which led the noble Earl to conceive that December was not the proper time to meet the proposal which had been made, probably influenced Her Majesty's Government in putting into the mouth of Her Majesty the words of the Speech from the Throne. (Hear, hear.) Parliament met on the 6th of January, and I will ask your attention to these words which were then addressed from the Throne to your lordships:—

"A rising in the Transvaal has recently imposed upon me the duty of taking military measures with a view to the prompt vindication of my authority, and has of necessity set aside for the time any plan for securing to the European settlers that full control over their own local affairs, without prejudice to the interests of the natives, which I have been desirous to confer."

In the Address presented by your lordships in answer to that most gracious speech you thanked Her Majesty for the information we had received that the authority of the Crown would be promptly vindicated, and that not until that was done could the time arrive for conferring the boon upon the European settlers that was indicated in the latter part of the sentence which I have just read. "Rising in the Transvaal," of course, means a rebellion or insurrection: and I now wish to ask the Secretary of State whether the authority of the Crown has been promptly vindicated in the Transvaal? (Cheers.) Has the action at Laing's Nek promptly vindicated the authority of the Crown? (Cheers.) Has the reverse at Ingogo? Has the disaster at the Majuba? (Cheers.) I wish to ask the Secretary of State whether he conceives that after these occurrences the authority of the Crown stood in a higher and

better position than on the 6th of January last, and if it did not what has become of your prompt vindication of the authority of the Crown ? (Cheers.) But I wish to call your lordships' attention to the second part of the sentence. The duty of vindicating the authority of the Crown has, it is stated, " set aside for the time the plan for securing to the European settlers that full control over their own local affairs without prejudice to the interests of the natives which I have been desirous to confer." Do these words, I ask, in the mouth of the Sovereign point to a cession of territory ? Do they point to an abandonment of territory ? Do they point to a dismemberment of the empire ? (Cheers.) When the Government, through the mouth of the Sovereign upon the Throne, speak of conferring free institutions upon a portion of the British dominions, it is understood that the Sovereignty of Her Majesty over that portion of the Empire is retained; that while there may be an alteration in the form of government, the Sovereignty remains where it stood before. (Cheers.) I challenge Her Majesty's Government to produce any instance in any State paper in existence where words of this kind in a speech from the Throne were used to indicate or denote the dismemberment of the empire (cheers)—that is to say, abandon the country and leave it free to establish a republic or any form of government they pleased. Upon those words in Her Majesty's most gracious Speech I have a few questions to put to the Secretary of State. Is the arrangement spoken of in the Speech from the Throne,and which was at that time contemplated by the Government, the same as that which has now actually been made with regard to the Transvaal ? If it is not—if it is a different arrangement—will the Secretary of State allow me further to ask him, when did the change in the opinions of the Government take place, and why ? (Cheers.) If, on the other hand, the Secretary of State says it is the same arrangement which was contemplated by the Government at the time of Her Majesty's gracious Speech, I wish to know why was that arrangement misdescribed in the words I have read ? (Cheers.) Why was Parliament, I won't say left in ignorance, but misled as to what was intended by the Government ? (Cheers.) Why were words put into the mouth of our most gracious Sovereign which, according to every interpretation of words coming from such a source, meant that the sovereignty of the Transvaal was to be retained ? (Cheers.) But I have a further question to ask. If the arrangement which has actually been made is that contemplated at the time of Her Majesty's most gracious Speech, and if the authority of the Crown has not been vindicated, I want to know what we have been fighting about in the interval ? (Cheers.) If this arrangement is what was intended, why did you not give it at once ? Why did you spend the treasure of the country, and still more, why did you shed the blood of the country like water, only to give at the end what you had intended to give at the beginning ? (Cheers.) We know that there are those who have lost in the Transvaal that which was dearer to them than the light of

their eyes. They have been consoled with the reflection that the brave men who died, died fighting for their Queen and their country. Are the mourners now to be told that those men were fighting for a country which the Government had determined to abandon, and that they were fighting for a Queen who was no longer to be the Sovereign of that country? (Cheers.)

But let us go a little further into the history of this matter. I wish to know when it was that the idea in the mind of the Government of vindicating the authority of the Crown was abandoned. There is a very remarkable passage in one of the orders issued by the Secretary of State to Sir George Colley. On the 5th of February the Secretary of State telegraphed Sir George Colley in these words:—

"I think it right to intimate to you, as you have instructions to assume the functions of Governor when you are able to enter the Transvaal, that whenever you may succeed in re-establishing the Queen's authority there, all question affecting the future administration and settlement of the country, as well as questions as to dealing with those who have taken part against the Government should be reserved by you for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government."

That is a very instructive telegram. It shows at once the construction put at that time by the Government upon the most gracious Speech from the Throne, and that construction is, I think, exactly that which ought to be put upon it. The re-establishment of the Queen's authority in the Transvaal was the task which the Government put before Sir George Colley, and the re-establishment of the Queen's authority was the vindication of that authority. (Cheers.) But what becomes of these instructions? The next thing we have is a communication from the President of the Orange Free State—Mr. Brand. How Mr. Brand came to be set in motion I do not know, and it is not my business to conjecture. There are various theories on this subject, but I take what I find in these papers. On the 5th of February, the day on which the Secretary of State telegraphed to Sir George Colley, a proposal came from Mr. Brand through Sir George Colley that the Boers should not be treated as rebels "if they submitted." How was that received by the Secretary of State? We are here on the first step of a descending scale, which is of an interesting character. The Secretary of State adopts the expression of "submission." He telegraphs to Sir George Colley,

"I have received your telegram of the 5th. Inform Mr. Brand that Her Majesty's Government will be ready to give all reasonable guarantees as to the treatment of the Boers *after submission*."

The question, consequently, now comes to be, What was meant by the submission of the Boers? Well, the submission of rebels means, I apprehend, that they should lay down their arms, and that they should give up the strong places which they occupy in opposition to the Queen. (Cheers.) Unless these things are done, there is no submission at all. But to continue the history of the matter, which is very curious. On the same day—that is to say, the 5th of February—took place the battle of the Ingogo, and from that day

the word "submission" disappears from the telegrams. (Cheers.) It never occurs again. On the 16th of February I find a telegram from the Secretary of State to Sir E. Wood in these terms:—

"Inform Kruger that if Boers will desist from armed opposition" (there is no reference to submission now) we shall be quite ready to appoint Commissioners with extensive powers, who may develop the scheme referred to in my telegram to you of the 8th inst. Add that if this proposal is accepted, you are authorized to agree to suspension of hostilities on our part."

Submission is now removed out of the question. The proposal now is that the Boers should cease from armed opposition. Now, I want to know, what is the meaning of the Boers ceasing from armed opposition? What were the Boers doing? The Boers were in the Transvaal. Our garrisons were beleaguered there. Our forces were marching up to relieve our garrisons, and to re-establish our authority in the Transvaal. The Boers were opposing the advance of our troops. That was the position of things. We were moving; they were opposing. "If the Boers would desist from armed opposition." The meaning of that is that our troops were no longer to be interfered with, that they were to continue their march, that the garrisons were to be relieved, and that our troops were to establish authority in the Transvaal. (Cheers.) But nothing of the kind was intended, and nothing of the kind was done. That was what embarrassed Sir G. Colley, and he said, "I understand what this means if we are to go on and the Boers are to cease; but do you mean that we are to cease and that that is to be the way in which opposition is to come to an end?" Sir G. Colley asks very naturally the question, "Am I to leave our garrisons isolated? Is that what you mean by the Boers ceasing from armed opposition?" These are his words: "Latter part of your telegram to Wood not understood. There can be no hostilities if no resistance is made: but am I to leave Lang's Nek in Natal territory in Boer occupation, and our garrisons isolated and short of provisions, or occupy former and relieve latter?" The Secretary of State answers that the garrisons should be free to provision themselves, and peaceful intercourse with them allowed, but he adds, "We do not mean that you should march to the relief of the garrisons or occupy Lang's Nek, if the arrangement proceeds." What was the consequence? Did opposition cease? Opposition, my lords, triumphed (cheers); it was we who ceased. (Cheers.) "Opposition" had nothing to go on for; it got everything it wanted. (Hear, hear.) We now come to the battle of Majuba on the 26th of February. What was the advice of Sir E. Wood under the circumstances? Did he say, "Cease from opposition; let nothing more be done?" Would that be very like Sir E. Wood? (Hear, hear.) He gave some very striking and pointed advice to Her Majesty's Government. That advice your lordships will find at page 21 of the White Book which I hold in my hand. He says:—

"Reflecting on similar struggles in history, I do not attach much importance to punishing leaders, as did Sir G. Colley, though I would not recommend allowing them to remain in Transvaal, nor would I accept them as representatives of people. In discussing settle-

ment of country my constant endeavour shall be to carry out the spirit of your orders, but, considering the disasters we have sustained, I think that the happiest result will be that, after accelerating successful action which I hope to fight in about 14 days, the Boers should disperse without any guarantee, and then many now undoubtedly coerced will readily settle down."

Sir E. Wood knew that reinforcements were at hand, the strength of the position he was occupying, and he spoke as any one, humanly speaking, would have spoken under the circumstances, with the perfect certainty of the success of the exertions which he was ready to make. (Cheers.) I think it cannot be doubted by any person that when our reinforcements came up there would have been no bloodshed, and that the matter would have been settled with, probably, hardly any exchange of hostilities. (Hear.) But, at all events, that was the opinion of Sir E. Wood, but no notice seems to have been taken of it by the Government at home. The phrase about ceasing from armed opposition was repeated and repeated in every telegram from that time from Downing Street, and nothing else. (Hear, hear.) The first variation of the phrase, so far as I can find, came not from Downing Street, but from Mr. Kruger. The Boers are very shrewd men. They are not misled by captivating phrases, and what did Mr. Kruger think of this phrase, "cease from armed opposition?" He put a construction on it which your lordships will find at page 28. He said.—"We are very grateful for the declaration in the name of Her Majesty's Government that under certain conditions *they* are inclined to cease hostilities." (Cheers, and a laugh.) It is not the Boers, you will observe, it is the Government who are inclined to cease from hostilities. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Kruger quite understood the telegram: he read between the lines; he is a clever man, and he does not talk about the Boers ceasing opposition, but of the disposition of the English Government to take that course. But what, let me ask, was the final basis on which Mr. Kruger came into this arrangement? There was no repudiation of the construction which he put on the offer of the Government. As your lordships will find at page 25, he would have nothing whatever to do with the telegram of the Secretary of State of February 8, and the reason he gives is that if he accepted it, it would be like admitting that the Boers were in the wrong. He speaks of holding to Sir G. Colley's telegram of the 16th of February, a letter of the 21st of February, another telegram of the 12th of February, and a letter of the 29th of January. These are four documents which Mr. Kruger puts forward, and he says that it is upon the footing of these four documents that he is prepared to enter into negotiations. Here I may say that I have a question to put to the Secretary of State which is of some importance. [The Earl of Kimberley said it might be well to inform the noble and learned lord at once that he had never been put in possession of the telegram of the 16th of February nor the letter of the 21st. That of the 29th of January he only saw in the newspapers.] Nothing can be further from my intention than to suggest

that the Secretary of State is in possession of those documents. I know his candour too well to doubt that if they were in his possession he would have laid them on the table. But there is something more important. This telegram was brought to the notice of the Secretary of State, in which Mr. Kruger says, "Now, understand, I am going to enter into negotiations with you on the footing of these four documents." The Secretary of State says he has not got the documents, but without them how could he know how the negotiations were to be conducted, or what Mr. Kruger meant? Why did not the noble earl say, the moment he got this telegram, "I do not know what you refer to; you speak of documents which ought to be in the possession of the Government but which are not." But I pass to something still more important. What is the final statement of Mr. Kruger in his telegram? It is this, that the only basis on which he will enter into negotiations is the restoration of the Republic. Short of that he says he will not treat, and with that document before them the Government, if they entered into negotiations, of course did so on the terms of Mr. Kruger, which embraced the restoration of the Republic. (Cheers.) That is the common sense of the matter, whether you are dealing with Boers or Englishmen. So much for the history of the transaction. These, then, my Lords, are the six stages of the "Surrender's Progress," they are almost worthy of the pencil of a Hogarth. There is first a patriotic and almost passionate determination to vindicate and restore the authority of the Crown. In the second place comes a lower offer—let there be at least submission on the part of the Boers. Thirdly, we reach by this ladder of degradation, a still lower platform—no longer vindication of the authority of the Crown, no longer submission, but cessation from armed opposition with a strong intimation that there would be nothing to oppose. (Cheers.) What comes next? The advice of your General to settle the country by acting on your military power, and that advice disregarded. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Kruger then comes upon the scene, and his view is, "It is you, and not we who are to cease from hostilities." And what is the last? Mr. Kruger again says, "Cease from hostilities; go into negotiation, but only on the terms of our having everything we ever asked for, including the restoration of the Republic." (Cheers.)

Well, now I come to the terms of this surrender. In the first place, I have a question to ask as to the authority of the persons with whom you are treating. Have you thought who they are who were negotiating with you, and with whom you have made your agreement? What are we told about this in the papers before us? The first intimation we have is the view of Sir E. Wood, who as I said just now, stated that he would not treat with Mr. Joubert or Mr. Kruger. He did not accept them as the representatives of the people. That was his view. What was the view of the Secretary of State? He did not agree with the view of Sir E. Wood, and answered him in these words

—" We should make no exception as to the persons with whom we will negotiate, requiring only that they should be duly authorized representatives of the Boers, with power to act on their behalf." How were they duly authorized ? Will the Secretary of State inform us ? I am bound to say, on behalf of Messrs. Kruger and Joubert, that they seem to have very great doubt about their own authority. They at every turn tell you that they are shaking in their shoes for fear their acts will be repudiated by the Boers. And what finally did they say to Sir E. Wood ? Sir E. Wood said, " They asked, had I the power to recognize him (Kruger) as representing the Boer Government, and did I represent the English ? I replied ' Yes.' " Well, it was quite true that Sir E. Wood represented the English, but had he the power to accept Kruger as representing the Boer Government? The Secretary of State required that the persons with whom we should negotiate should be duly authorized. I find no authority whatever. (Cheers.) This is not a mere technicality ; I should think very little of the point if it were. It is a matter of very considerable importance. Mr. Kruger is undoubtedly very apprehensive as to whether his acts will not be repudiated. We see every day in the ordinary channels of information that the opinion commonly entertained in the neighbourhood is that it is likely there will be a civil war, and that there are two parties, if not more, in the country. Well, if there should be a civil war, which side are we going to take ? Are we going to side with the loyal Boers against the Triumvirate, or with the Triumvirate against the loyal Boers ? (Cheers.) Suppose that everything that Kruger has done should be disavowed, what is to happen ? If this were a matter that would be finished and done with when done, I could understand our being ready to run some risk. But this is an arrangement which is to run on for six months. There are all sorts of things to be done under it, and if these things are not done the arrangement will not be of the slightest value to us. If it comes to pass that the acts of those who made this arrangement are repudiated, we shall have no power to insist upon the performance of any of the things to be done under it. Is it consistent with the dignity or with the interest of this country to accept the words of a Triumvirate who have with considerable violence seized upon the government and to assume that they have authority to bind all the inhabitants of that country? (Cheers.)

Now let me come to the terms. The first is—"the right of the Transvaal people to complete self-government." I want, in the first place, to know how it came to pass that this term, conceding at once complete self-government (as it is called) was made by Sir E. Wood ? I think something has dropped out here —some paper is missing. Of course, I don't mean to say that the Secretary of State has it, but it must be somewhere. But how does the matter stand according to the evidence of the book before us ? The Secretary of State, on March 12, said—" The Commis-

sion would be *authorised to consider* the following points," and the first is "complete self-government under British suzerainty." The Commission would be authorized to do that—that is to say, that when the Commission was appointed it would take the matter into consideration and determine whether there should be self-government, and in what form. I suppose that is the meaning of the words. Well, what happened next? Your lordships will remember Mr. Kruger's communication, in which he says—"I am going into the conference upon the basis of the restoration of the Republic, and upon no other basis." I find on the part of the Secretary of State neither any acceptance of what Mr. Kruger said nor any repudiation of it—nothing about it. The next step is the stipulation by Sir E. Wood that there should be complete self-government. Now, when did the Secretary of State authorize that stipulation to be made? What he did authorize was that the Commission should consider it. What is done is that the stipulation is without any reference to the Commission, actually made and agreed to. I know Sir E. Wood pretty well, and I am satisfied that he never went an inch beyond the authority given him. What I want to know is the way in which the authority was given him. Will the Secretary of State give us the information? Is the Secretary of State, or is he not, the head of the Colonial Office? Is somebody else conducting these negotiations? (Cheers.) I trust we may have an explanation of this matter for the sake of Sir E. Wood, if for no other reason. (Hear, hear.) My next observation is this: We have got here the term "complete self-government to be given to the Boers." Those are not Sir E. Wood's words. He is a soldier who does not use jargon of that kind. He talks plain English, and never called the abandonment of the territory of the Crown and the setting up of a Republic complete self-government. (Cheers.) That is not what a soldier would call it. (Hear, hear.) I think it is impossible not to see what these terms were inserted for. Their insertion is an effort—a feeble effort—to square what was done with the words of the most gracious Speech from the Throne. (Cheers.) If you had said what was true—I mean what was accurate—you would have said, "The Transvaal is ceded to the Boers; the annexation is cancelled; the Republic is restored, and the Queen has no longer anything to say to the territory." (Hear, hear.) That is the English of what is being done. Who can doubt that that is the real effect of these transactions? (Hear, hear.) The Transvaal at this moment is the property of the Crown. When this treaty is carried out, the Transvaal will cease to be the property of the Crown. Is that not dismemberment of the Empire? Is that not cession of territory? Is that not abandonment of the dominions of the Queen? And, forsooth, you call this, as if you were giving free institutions to a colony, local self-government! (Cheers.) My Lords, you are giving Ireland a pretty lesson as to what you mean by local self-government. (Hear, hear.) Our fellow subjects across the channel are very fond of using that term. Take care

that you do not teach them it has a meaning which will make them still fonder of it. (Cheers.)

But now, I have something more to say upon the subject of this cession of territory. I do not desire to raise any legal question at this moment, but I wish to enter my protest against this straining and stretching of the prerogative of the Crown. We have heard a good deal of late years in the way of charge against straining the prerogative of the Crown. Take care, lest you strain it as it has never been strained before. I want to know what right the Crown has to abandon territory. It is a very difficult question, about which a good deal could be said. I recollect what was done in the case of the Orange Free State. There was much doubt entertained as to how that State was to be given up, and in great doubt the Secretary of State at the time determined under the peculiar circumstances of the case to repeal Letters Patent by an Order in Council and not to ask for an Act of Parliament. But in the case of the Orange Free State there had been no war, and the Imperial Parliament had never legislated upon the subject. In the case of the Transvaal the subjects of the Queen were in rebellion, and the English Parliament had stepped in and had voted money and legislated in a form which embraced the Transvaal. But, my lords, do you recollect what was done a hundred years ago in the case of the American States? Did the Crown cede those States by its prerogative? Look back at the statutes. You will find there an Act of Parliament which authorized the Crown to cede those States, and until that Act was passed the Crown was not authorized to treat with the rebels and to cede that territory. My lords, I do not wish to encumber the case with any further argument upon the point; but I desire to express my grave doubts as to the course which the Government are pursuing. If they are right by the letter (which I doubt) they are certainly grievously straining the spirit of the prerogative.

Well, now I come to the next term, "Protection for the natives of the Transvaal." Protection for the natives of the Transvaal! That is indeed something to provide for The Commission, we are told, at page 7, will have to consider what securities shall be taken as to the future treatment of the natives. What "securities?" Now, my lords, let me say a few words upon this question. What are "the natives of the Transvaal?" There seems to be some doubt about their number. Nobody says they are less than 400,000; some say 500,000. [LORD KIMBERLEY.—About 700,000.] I believe the number is nearer 700,000 but I wished to be under the mark. These four or five or six or seven hundred thousand are now subjects of the Crown of England, and beyond all doubt so far as they are concerned they desire to remain subjects of the Crown. The Commission, you say, is to consider how they are to be protected. But what are they to be protected against? There is one thing they have to be protected from, which we find described in a despatch of the Administrator, Sir Owen Lanyon. The way

in which he describes their state is this—your lordships will find it on page 6 of his letters:—

"The unfortunate natives have suffered most from this outbreak because of their loyalty to Her Majesty. Numerous instances have been reported in which they have been wantonly shot down. They have been forced to work in the camps, and their property and cattle taken to supply the commissariat of men who had large flocks and herds of their own to draw upon. Were anything needed to show the necessity of Her Majesty's rule over the Transvaal it would be found in the reign of terror which exists and the sufferings which have been imposed upon these unfortunate natives."

But that is not by any means all. What is the history of these Boers? In the years 1833-4-5, after Great Britain had abolished slavery, the Boers fretted against the restraints of our law of freedom, and they left the Cape Colony, in which they had been living, and "trekked," as it is called, over the border and went up beyond the Vaal. In the year 1852 a treaty was made. We knew what their habits were; that they were slave-owners; that it was agreeable to their notion of right. The Sand River Convention was made in 1852. One of the terms was that there was to be no slavery north of a certain limit. My lords, you know that that term of the Convention has been continuously and systematically disregarded. The Boers have practised slavery. My lords, they practise it now in a way which is extremely formidable to deal with, because it is not as if the moral sentiment of the people were against slavery, and only certain wrongdoers were violating the law. But the Boers have not brought the mild and beneficent influence of Christianity to bear upon their understanding of Holy Writ. They go back to the Old Testament, and they find in it—or they think they find in it—a justification for these practices; and they hold that if slavery is not a divine institution it is at least permitted. What is the practice of these people? I take one authority—I might adduce fifty from the Blue Books, but I select one authority from one of the Blue Books, which is a statement given by an unprejudiced witness. It is from a Colonial newpaper, the *Cape Argus*—

"The whole world may know it, for it is true, and investigation will only bring out the horrible details, that through the whole course of this Republic's existence it has acted in contravention of the Sand River Convention, and slavery has occurred, not only here and there in isolated cases, but as an unbroken practice has been one of the peculiar institutions of the country, mixed up with all its social and political life. It has been at the root of most of its wars; it has been carried on regularly even in the times of peace."

That description seems to me to be of great and grave importance. (Hear, hear.) But, my lords, even in the legislation of this people you will find sanctioned that which is, under a thin disguise, actual slavery. The disguise is the guardianship of orphans. In the Transvaal it would appear, as some one has said, as if all the black children were orphans. (Laughter.) Every child which they can get hold of is subjected to that which, in their views, is perfectly legitimate. We heard in this House only three weeks ago, from

the lips of the Secretary of State himself, the story of the Boer chief who brought home over the border, or from some other quarter, 32 Caffre girls, whom he sold for 10s apiece in his own neighbourhood. (Hear, hear.) Now, my lords, this is the nation you have to deal with. These are the four five six or seven hundred thousand people whom you have to protect. This is the system against which you have to protect them. My lords, this country has made great sacrifices, great exertions for the purpose of suppressing or extirpating slavery. I shall be surprised, indeed, if this country tolerates the handing back into that which is really a liability to slavery, a nation of hundreds of thousands of people who, at this moment, are free British subjects. (Cheers.) If this thing is to be done, at all events, it shall not be done in a corner. It shall be done in the light of day, and as far as my feeble voice can reach, I will endeavour to explain and expose the real character of the act which is to be done. (Cheers.) Well, but you say, the Commission is to consider the question of the treatment of the natives. What can the Commission do? What is the protection which these people require? Recollect what the Transvaal is. It is a country larger than France. Homesteads are scattered over the country twenty or thirty miles, or much more, apart from each other. And what you have to watch over and superintend is what goes on in each of these homesteads. My lords, how is that to be done? Are you going to occupy the country with an armed occupation? What less are you going to do?* There is one protection and one only which can avail for the protection of the coloured people. That is the protection of courts of justice, deriving their authority from the British Crown, and supported by the power of the British Crown. Unless every native of the Transvaal can come before a British court of justice and say, "I am a free man, or a free boy, or a free girl, and I demand the protection of the British Crown as a British subject;" until that can done, day after day, there can be no protection for the native inhabitants of the country. (Cheers.) My lords, I read just now from the gracious Speech from the Throne some words which I did not think at the time had the meaning which it now appears they bear. It is the passage which speaks of securing the rights of European settlers "without prejudice to the interests of the natives." Without prejudice! It ends like a lawyer's letter. My lords, is it possible that the annihilation of the rights of 700,000 British subjects in the matter of freedom is to be spoken of as an arrangement which is not to prejudice the rights of the natives? (Cheers.) My lords, I recollect when this country was greatly moved at certain instructions from the Admiralty which were supposed to imply that a slave who took refuge in an English ship might be surrendered to his owner. Has this country so altered its views

* The Secretary of State in reply to this question answered, "The stipulation which was made at the Sand River Convention will be simply renewed"—*Times*, April 1, 1881.

with regard to slavery that it will permit hundreds of thousands of British subjects to be handed back to a system which really is slavery as much as any slavery that ever prevailed in the world? (Cheers.)

What comes next? "The control of foreign relations is to be reserved." What, my lords, is the meaning of that term? I know what this term means in the Congress Halls of Vienna, or Berlin, or Paris, or London. What I want to know is the meaning of the term as applied to a half-civilized race like the Boers. What are the foreign relations of the Boers? Do you mean their relations with Portugal? We do not want them reserved, because Portugal is our ally. What are the foreign relations of the Boers? I will tell your lordships what they are. The foreign relations of the Boers are with the Zulus, the Swazis, the Pondos, and, if there be any other native border tribes; and the foreign relations of the Boers consist of stealing cattle across the border of the Zulus, and the Zulus stealing cattle across the border of the Boers, and Zulus and Boers grazing cattle by trespass on each other's grounds, and the Boers illtreating the Zulus when they come into the Transvaal, and the Zulus illtreating the Boers when they come into Zululand. (Laughter.) These are the relations which are grandiloquently termed the foreign relations of the Boers, and which we have reserved. Are we really going to reserve this treasure? (Cheers.) Are we really going to reserve squabbles about cattle stealing and grazing over limits, and complaints of illtreatment on one side of the border or the other? I want to know from the Secretary of State is that his view of the foreign relations which he is so anxious to keep for us? (Cheers.) But if so, how are we to deal with them? Suppose that a Boer is illtreated by the Zulus in their country, and the Boers want redress, must they ask our leave before they seek it? Or suppose the Boers are attacked by the Swazis, are we going to defend the Boers or to forbid them defending themselves? Are you going to make military provision for maintaining these foreign relations, or, on the other hand, are you going to say to the Boers that they shall do this, or that, or the other, and yet refuse to defend them for following your advice, which brings them into trouble? (Cheers.) That brings me to another question. Are we going to be protectors of the Boers or are we not? Now, I will deal frankly with your lordships on this subject. When I read over this book I did not find in it one word implying that we were to protect the Boer Republic, and I said to myself: "A very foolish thing to reserve the foreign relations of the Boers, but at all events we are not saddled with the duty of protecting this people in their foreign relations." But my illusion was broken by a document, which I find, not in this book, but in other channels of information. It is in a communication from Sir Evelyn Wood. It is dated Durban, March 24 and is published in the newspapers:—

"The Colonial Secretary to-night issued the following communication from Sir Evelyn Wood:—'Terms of peace have been signed. The Boers have gone away. Free trade intercourse permitted throughout the Transvaal. A Royal

Commission is to assemble at once to consider all points left in abeyance and recommend to the Imperial Government what, speaking generally, shall be the Eastern boundaries of a self-governing republic, which is to have a British Resident and to be under a British protectorate.'"

Is that an authentic document or not? The Secretary of State shakes his head. [The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—I do not know.] The noble earl does not know whether the Boer republic is to be protected by us or not. [The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—I beg the noble earl's pardon. I did not say that. I said I did not know whether the document quoted is or is not authentic.] Then, I suppose, the noble Earl can tell us whether this statement in the document is correct or not. It is issued by Sir Evelyn Wood. It is a very serious thing, and I should be very glad to hear that there is some mistake about it. I have no wish to press the document if it is unauthorized. Bad as other things are here, I shall be glad to hear that there is not to be a protectorate. But the document is issued on the spot. You may not know of it, but it has been issued in the country, and the people of the country will believe it. (Hear, hear.)

Well, now I come to the next point. The Transvaal will be under the suzerainty of the Queen. I hope your lordships will not suppose that I am going to give a learned or antiquarian explanation of what the word suzerainty means. I have no intention of doing anything of the kind. I am content to take the word upon the negative and affirmative meanings which we have received from the Government. The negative meaning we have received from the Prime Minister. He says that suzerainty does not mean sovereignty. Well I know very well that it does not (laughter); and what s more, if it did the Boers would not have accepted it. (Cheers.) It is just because it does not mean sovereignty that they have submitted to it. (Hear, hear.) What does it mean? What it means is described by Sir Evelyn Wood, and his glossary —his interpretation—may be found at page 29 of the papers. He defines suzerainty to mean this, "that the country is to have entire self-government as regards its own interior affairs, but that it cannot take action against or with an outside Power without permission of the suzerain." That is to say, the foreign relations of the Boers are reserved. (A laugh.) Now, my objection to that is this. I object to your taking a word and coupling it with the name of the Sovereign of this country, and putting a meaning on the word which is not the real meaning—which is a conventional meaning; because it is perfectly clear that whatever may be the real meaning of the word, what it does not mean is that foreign relations are reserved. It is quite clear that it does not mean that. [The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—Why?] Why? Will the noble Earl produce any book, any State paper—any instance in history—in which a Power which had no connection with another Power except through the one circumstance of foreign relations being reserved was called the suzerain of that other Power? If this is the meaning of suzerainty,

that wherever the foreign relations are reserved you have a case of suzerainty, the consequence is that the Sovereign of this country is the suzerain of Afghanistan. Because the Sovereign of this country, according to your treaty, has control of the foreign relations of Afghanistan. [The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—What treaty?] I am willing to be corrected, but we have understood that the arrangement with Abdurrahman is that the foreign relations are reserved. (Hear, hear,) But that is of very little importance. What I do care about is this. I object to your coining a meaning for a word—a word which has another meaning, I object to your taking possession of a word and giving it a special meaning for a particular purpose, and then connecting it with the Sovereign of this country. Why, you might as well take the word Archimandrite, and say that by that term you mean that Foreign relations are reserved, and then say that the Queen is the Archimandrite of the Transvaal. (Laughter.) You have no right to take a word and give it a meaning which is your meaning and not the meaning of the word. And I object to your coining by the prerogative a style for the British Sovereign hitherto unknown. But I will tell you why the word is taken. It is quite palpable what the reason is. The word is selected for this reason. It is selected in order that you may go on the one hand to the Boers and tell them—and tell them truly—"Suzerain does not mean Sovereign; suzerainty does not mean sovereignty; you may be quite satisfied:" and then that you may come home here and jingle in the ears of the unthinking people of the country the word suzerainty, and leave them to think that it has the sound and semblance of, and some connection with, sovereignty. (Loud cheers.)

Now I come to the Commission, and I want to know what is the authority that this Commission is to have and how is it to be supported. I know what has happened with regard to the Boers. The Boers, when the Commission was talked of, proposed not unnaturally that they should be represented upon that Commission. They asked that they should have two members, and they would have agreed to be bound by its decision, perhaps, had they been represented. But that was declined. It was decided that there must be no Boers on the Commission at all. I do not find one word in these papers showing that the Boers have consented to be bound by what this Commission will do. (Hear, hear.) I cannot find a word binding even the Triumvirate. We hear from various quarters that there is very great indignation as to what this Commission is to do, and we hear mutterings both loud and deep that the Boers will not be bound by anything the Commission does. What we may naturally ask is—Suppose the Boers refuse to be bound, how are you going to support the authority of the Commission? What authority have you at this moment in the Transvaal to support it? You have the same authority that you have in Abyssinia. You may invade Abyssinia and you may invade the Transvaal, but until you invade the Transvaal you have no authority there. (Cheers.) Your garrisons are cooped up and you can

exercise no authority by compulsion. Suppose you mean to enforce it by invasion, what is your position with regard to invasion? Your reinforcements, where are they? Three or four regiments have been ordered home. Your General is coming home in the packet ship—that is to say, if he can find room among the numbers who are doubtless hurrying away from a land which you are making uninhabitable for Englishmen. (Cheers.) The spirit of your troops is lowered, the authority of the Crown is discredited; and what about the loyal Boers? I do not know how many of them there are. I know that various opinions are entertained on that subject. Some say they are the majority; a great many people think so. It is quite clear that Mr. Kruger and Mr. Joubert think they are in great numbers, for they are much afraid of them. (Hear, hear) Well, but if you had entered the Transvaal in the persent state of affairs, these loyal Boers would have been your friends and supporters. Will they be so hereafter? You have betrayed them once; do you suppose they will ever let you betray them again? (Cheers.) They will know much too well for that. Those loyal men will for the future be arrayed against you along with the rest of the nation. That is the way in which you are going to support your Commission.

But, my lords, I find as regards this Commission a very remarkable statement, as to which we must have some information from the Secretary of State. It appears, among other things, that the Commission is to consider whether there shall not be taken off the Transvaal a portion of territory to the east of the 30th parallel of longitude. There is about as much land there, by the look of it, as England and Scotland together. Therefore, the portion in question may be a tolerably large slice. I see that it is said in the papers that the Boers will not consent to have anything taken off the Transvaal; but I know not how that may be. But for what purpose do the Government wish to separate the piece of land to the east of the 30th parallel from the rest of the Transvaal? The idea appears to be that it is to be some "buffer," as it is called, between the land of the Boers of the Transvaal and the countries to the east of that territory. I don't suppose that you want a "buffer" between the Boers and the Portuguese. Remember that to the east, of the 30th parallel you have first the Portuguese, then Amatonga, and then the Zulus. You want to separate the Boers from the natives of Amatonga and of Zululand. The intervening piece of land I take it for granted you do not mean to leave as "no man's land," without any owner. If you do, either the Boers will take it again, or the Swazis or the Zulus will do so. Are we then to keep that land and to interpose between the Boers, the Swazis, and the Zulus? We have some right to know what the Government intend to do. We are not to be hood-winked as to a matter which is all-important in regard to the policy to be pursued in South Africa. You know very well that that intervening piece of land will be of no use to you as an interval between the Trans-

vaal and the native tribes unless you garrison it with British troops. Are you going to garrison it with British troops ? Is that the policy of the Government ? Let us know it if it is, because nothing more disastrous could occur to us than that, after giving up the Transvaal and exciting all the loyal natives and the loyal Boers against us we are to end by having a chain of garrisons along the eastern part of the Transvaal, which is most isolated from support. (Cheers.)

I come next to the provision that until the completion of the arrangements with the Boers our garrisons are to remain, are to have food, but are to have no ammunition. (Hear, hear.) No ammunition is to be brought by us into the country of the Transvaal. What does this mean ? I own that I am ashamed to be the person to explain it. Do your lordships remember what has happened ? What were our Transvaal garrisons at the commencement of the war ? Our soldiers were cooped up in them; they were surrounded; our troops were marching from Natal to relieve them. In substance, though not in form, the garrisons were prisoners; they could not move out. Our troops were marching to relieve them, You are going to leave these garrisons there. What will their position be ? I see calculations made as to whether they have ammunition for a week, for two weeks, or for three. It does not matter in the least whether they have ammunition for one week, for two, or for three weeks ; if you have not the right to supply fresh ammunition their ammunition is limited, and they are at the mercy of the Boers around them. (Cheers.) And while you in form leave this country to imagine that you are doing something in their favour by arranging that these garrisons are to remain in the Transvaal, the truth and the English of it is that these garrisons are hostages in the hands of the Boers. (Cheers.) That is where the Government leaves them : those English troops are hostages in the hands of the Boers. This reminds us of the painful occurrences at Potchefstroom. There was a time when this country would have expressed a stronger opinion about what has happened at Potchefstroom than it has yet done. What has happened ? There was an armistice agreed upon between Sir E. Wood and the leaders of the Boers. What were the terms of that armistice? I will read it to your lordships. At page 22 it is said that the third term of the armistice is that " Mr. Joubert undertakes to send notice of the armistice and its conditions to the respective garrisons." (Hear, hear.) Remember, it was for the Boer commander, Mr. Joubert, to do this, and not for us. The armistice was made on the 7th, and the garrison had to surrender 14 days after. (Hear, hear). I hear that there was a convoy of mules going on from Sir E. Wood with provisions for this garrison, and that this convoy of mules did not, could not, make the distance of 200 miles in 14 days. Very possibly ; but that has nothing to do with the matter. Mr. Joubert was not to send his notice by a convoy of our mules. He personally undertook to send notice to the garrison; and does anybody

say that messengers could not traverse in the Transvaal a space of 200 miles in less than 14 days ? I heard with surprise the noble Earl say that he and the Secretary of State for War were conferring on this matter, and that they had not received sufficient information. My lords, I should have thought that 10 minutes, or even 10 seconds, would have been sufficient for any English Minister to know what ought to be done under the circumstances (cheers), and that in 10 seconds after the receipt of the news there would have been flashed from Downing Street, with the lightning speed of the electric wire, a message to the Boer Triumvirate, not that any life that had been lost should be restored—that, alas ! could not be done—but that every arm that had been taken must be restored, the ammunition must be given back, full indemnity must be made for every loss, and that every word written with regard to the surrender of Potchefstroom must be absolutely and completely cancelled and obliterated. (Cheers.) And, my lords, if that has not been done, I do maintain that never before in the history of England has such an act occurred and such an act been allowed to be so long unredressed. (Renewed cheers.)

And now I come to the stipulation as to Lang's Nek. What is the provision with regard to it? As the Boers, we read, have agreed to withdraw from Lang's Nek and to disperse to their homes, Sir E. Wood promises not to take possession of that position, nor to follow them up with troops, nor to send ammunition into the Transvaal. Lang's Nek is in the colony of Natal. The Transvaal is our country, too, but Lang's Nek is in Natal. The Boers retire from Lang's Nek, and we in Natal are bound hand and foot ; our troops are not to occupy Lang's Nek. My lords, can we speak patiently of this ? (Cheers.) Not to occupy Lang's Nek! What is the explanation of the Prime Minister about this ? He says these words only mean that the Boers were dispersing and there was not to be a pursuit of the Boers. Well, if that was what was intended, a very few words would have been sufficient—not to occupy Lang's Nek for 24 hours, or for a day, or for a week. But an absolute provision not to occupy Lang's Nek ! My lords, was ever such an insult offered as this, even according to the explanation of the Prime Minister ? (Cheers.) I can hardly trust myself to state it. Are we, are this great and spirited nation, gentlemen and men of honour I trust, making peace with the Boers, telling them that we do make peace with them, that they are to disperse (as one of its terms) to their own homes, and are they to turn round and tell us, "That is all very well for you, but we don't trust you ; we believe that at the moment of our dispersing, notwithstanding the peace, you would turn round and follow us and pursue us, and we therefore bind you not merely to make peace with us, but not to occupy positions in your own country from which you could pursue us ?" Was ever such an insult offered in private life, and is our nation so lost to all sense of honour that it can sit down under such an insult as that which the Prime Minister offers by way of explanation ? (Cheers.)

I come now to the next point. There is to be a Resident at the capital of the Boers, but there is to be no interference in the internal affairs of the country. Now, how is the Resident to be supported—I do not mean by money, but by force? The Boers are a rough sort of people, and even in our short intercourse with them during the last two months some rough things have been done. I do not suppose that this Resident will be very popular, and I wish to know, without anticipating the use of any extreme violence, how he is to be supported in the event of his being insulted. Or are you going to send him into the country without any support? If so, I need only remind the members of Her Majesty's Government that that was precisely what they denounced when it was done in Afghanistan. I trust we shall have an explanation on this point. (Hear, hear.)

Then I come to the amnesty, the terms of which are very remarkable. The amnesty extends to all, including the leaders, and excepts only persons directly responsible for acts contrary to the rules of civilized warfare. And in Sir E. Wood's final agreement we find that the Boer leaders said they would gladly co-operate with Her Majesty's Government in bringing to justice those who were directly responsible for acts contrary to the rules of civilized warfare. Now, who are these men? We know very well to whom these words ought to apply—namely, to the murderers of Captain Eliot, and to the authors of the massacre at Madder's Spruit. The Boers are to co-operate with us in bringing them to justice; but what does this mean? The murderers of Capt. Eliot are Boers in the Transvaal; they are nine in number, and are perfectly well known to everyone these. The murder was committed in broad daylight, and in the midst of the homesteads, so that every one knewwhat had happened. The leaders of the Boers are able to hand them over to us, and to tell us that they will co-operate with us is to invert the real position of affairs, for they are in possession of the Transvaal, and we can do nothing. It is for us to require them to hand over to us those persons, who are outside the pale of civilized warfare, instead of promising to co-operate with us. (Hear, hear.) But who are the others? You remember the affair of Madder's Spruit, and the account of it that has been communicated to us by the Government. The circumstances of the attack I will read to your lordships from the Official Report of Sir Owen Lanyon. He says:—

"The circumstances of the attack upon Colonel Anstruther's men—a force consisting of 268 men, women, and children—are told in a few words. Having selected their spot for the attack, the mounted force of the rebels surrounded the straggling wagon-train while on the line of march, and sent in a flag of truce to the officer commanding, and while he was reading the letter from the Triumvirate, and replying verbally that his instructions were to proceed to Pretoria, and that he must obey those instructions, the attacking force of rebels was, under cover of the flag of truce, advancing upon and surrounding the soldiers; and immediately the answer was given the rebels opened a deadly

fire, picked off the officers, and killed and wounded 157 of the small English force. The number of the dead now amounts to 70."

And further on he adds :

"The surrounding and gradual hemming in under a flag of truce of a force, and the selection of spots from which to direct their fire, as in the case of the unprovoked attack by the rebels upon Colonel Anstruther's force, in a proceeding of which very few like incidents can be mentioned in the annals of civilized warfare."

My lords, did I hear aright the other night a reply given that the Government had received no information to lead them to think that this massacre was not inside the rules of civilized warfare ? Did your lordships hear that in this House ? I trust there is some mistake, and that the noble Earl will rise and tell us that that is not what he meant to convey, and that the idea will not go forth that a transaction such as I have described is, according to the view of an English Government, within the pale of civilized warfare. (Cheers.)

And now as to the position of the English and the loyal Boers. I see in this paper some suggestion that somebody or other is to look after their interests. These loyal Boers number many thousands, of whom many are refugees in neighbouring countries, but many still remain in the Transvaal. I do not know whether it is true, as we read the other day, that Mr. Kruger said he would rather kill 20 of them than one English soldier ; but if there is any truth in these words, they show the temper in which the loyal Boers will be regarded by those who are now in the ascendant. And what have they to rely upon ? I remember that Sir Garnet Wolseley told them (I trust to my memory for the words) that the rivers might run back to their sources, or the sun rise in the West, before the Transvaal ceased to form part of the British dominion. (Hear, hear.) They relied on that assurance ; but was the word of Sir G. Wolseley of less avail than that of Sir Evelyn Wood ? And, if Sir E. Wood's word is now to be relied on, was Sir G. Wolseley's word not to be taken before ? Can you suppose that anything that this Commission can recommend, any promise that can be extracted, will prevent these Boers, when they return home, from regretting bitterly the day that they believed the word of an English general ? (Cheers.)

I cannot weary your lordships by going into a further examination of the details of this arrangement, though there is still much that might be said. I have risen, my lords, from the perusal of these papers with feelings which I find it difficult to describe. It is not easy, in the midst of the events which pass around us, to realize the character of the history we are creating for future ages ; but we can understand and look back upon the history of past times, and infer from this the manner in which we shall be regarded by those who come after us. It is just 200 years since a page was written in the annals of England, darkened by the surrenders of Burgoyne and Cornwallis. Those were surrenders made by generals at a distance from, and without communication with, home—on their own responsibility—in great emergency—and without the

possibility of any alternative. They were events, however, which both at the time and long afterwards deeply touched our national pride. But it will be recorded hereafter that it wasre served for the 19th century, and for the days of telegrams, to find a surrender, with reinforcements at hand, and every means for restoring the power and vindicating the authority of the Crown, dictated, word for word, by the Government at home. I observe that this arrangement is somewhere styled the Peace of Mount Prospect ; My lords, I much doubt whether it will not go down to posterity as the Capitulation of Downing Street. (Cheers.) You have administered a bitter cup to Englishmen abroad and Englishmen at home. And you have made the draught unduly and unnecessarily bitter. Surely some of the ingredients might have been spared. I wish you could have chosen for the conclusion of such a capitulation some other agent than one of the bravest, the most intrepid, the most promising generals in the service of the Queen. (Cheers.) I wish you could have spared our troops the intense mortification of being paraded in order to see a half civilized enemy marching off in triumph with arms and accoutrements captured from British soldiers. (Cheers.) I wish that while still the Transvaal remains, as you say it does, under our control, the British flag had not been first reversed and then trailed in insult through the mud. (Cheers.) I wish that the moment when you are weakening our Empire in the East had not been selected for dismembering our Empire in South Africa. (Cheers.) These are the aggravations of the transaction. You have used no pains to conceal what was humbling, and a shame that was real, you have also made burning. (Cheers.) But the transaction, without the aggravations, is bad enough. It has already touched, and will every day touch more deeply the heart of the nation. Other reverses we have had : other disasters. But a reverse is not dishonour, and disaster does not necessarily imply disgrace. To Her Majesty's Government we owe a sensation which to this country of ours is new, and which certainly is not agreeable.

"In all the ills we ever bore
We grieved, we sighed, we wept ; we never blushed before."

(Loud cheers.)

Read July 23rd

THE IRISH LAND BILL.

SPEECH

OF

MR. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MAY 19TH, 1881.

CORRECTED ON AUTHORITY.

MR. H. CHAPLIN, M.P.,

ON THE

IRISH LAND BILL.

Mr. CHAPLIN, who was received with loud cheers, said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not doubt that I shall express a very general feeling when I say that the introduction of another Irish Land Bill in the year 1881 cannot fail to suggest to the minds of hon. members reflections of the gravest, I will even say of the most painful character, and especially when we remember that it is not yet eleven years ago since the last great legislative measure dealing with this question was accepted by Parliament and by the country. To me I must say that it seems but the other day that I heard the right hon. gentleman, the author of this Bill, in language as eloquent as, and not dissimilar from, that which he used the other night, unfold to a crowded and anxious House of Commons the details of his great scheme of Land Reform in 1870, by which, to use his own description, his very words at that time, he desired by a manful effort to close and seal up for ever, if it might be, this great question so intimately concerning the happiness and prosperity of Ireland. Well do I remember the scene on that occasion, presenting, as it did, so marked and striking a resemblance in many respects to the scene we witnessed here again the other night before we parted, on the eve of the recess. Then, as now, I need not say, the case of the Minister was urged with a power and an eloquence which was not surpassed even upon this occasion. Then, as now, there was the same conviction, the same sincere, I do not doubt, and deep conviction of the goodness and justice of his cause, the same bright hopes and sanguine anticipations of a happy and a favourable future, the same popular acceptance of his views beyond these walls, the same powerful support of a great majority within them. Nay, more, as if to make more striking still the marked resemblance on these two occasions, the Minister himself concluded then, as now, with a magnificent and powerful appeal to the eternal principles of justice in a speech which fascinated friends and foes alike, and which contributed, I do not doubt, Sir, in no small degree to the ultimate passing and the final triumph of his measure. (Cheers.) I need not dwell on the progress of that measure. Suffice it to say that it shortly took its place on the Statute Book, and I think that hon. members on both sides will bear me out in saying that for months, nay, more, for many years the Liberal Party, as a whole, were never wearied of singing pæans in the praise of what they called this great heroic measure of legislation. But, alas, Sir, for the vanity of human aspirations. What is the position of that Act to-day? What have been its fruits? What are its friends and supporters saying of that measure now? There it is, unhappily, recorded in a short and simple sentence in one of the reports of one of the Commissions, not the Commission appointed by a Tory Government, and presided over by the Tory Duke of Richmond, but the Bess-

borough Commission, his own Commission, appointed by the Minister himself, to consider his own act and deed. (Cheers.) And it recommends, Sir, nothing short of its total and absolute repeal. (Loud cheers.) So much for heroic legislation. After eleven years operation of its working, I think I might say, *sic transit gloria mundi*. (Laughter and cheers.) I commend the careful study of that sentence to the consideration of the Government. I think it cannot fail to be of use to hon. and right hon. gentlemen on that side of the House who were enthusiastic supporters of that measure at the time, and who, for aught I know, are trying hard to be again enthusiastic in support of the latest proposition of the Prime Minister for the regeneration of Ireland. I cannot help thinking that the Minister will himself acknowledge and allow that, with this knowledge and experience now before our eyes, we are bound more than ever to scrutinize most narrowly the grounds on which Parliament is invited to enter upon and sanction for the second time what seem to me to be the strange and revolutionary proposals (loud cheers) contained, at all events, in one portion of this Bill. Now let me ask the House to consider what are the grounds upon which this measure is brought forward. The right hon. gentleman, upon the introduction of the Bill, gave us three reasons for his Bill. The first was that old and long standing evil, viz., the land hunger, which permeated, as he said, the people of the country. The second he based on the fact that the Land Act of 1870 was defective, and had become inadequate for its purpose ; and, as he called it, a third and a conclusive reason consisted in the fact that there were a limited number of bad landlords in the country, distinguished by conduct that differed from that of the greatly preponderating number. I am not here to-night to deny the justice or the truth of any one of those three reasons. But I utterly and totally deny that they are the only reasons for the introduction of this Bill, and I say that, on the other hand, the right hon. gentleman has omitted altogether all mention of that which I conceive to be the chief and the principal reason of them all. I shall have a word to say on that point before I bring my observations to a close. But I desire, in the first place, to examine the reasons that the Prime Minister has given us himself. I quite admit that the first two reasons are deserving of our most serious attention, but I cannot say with any truth that I attach the same importance as the right hon. gentleman to the third and final reason which he gave us, namely, that there are a limited number of bad landlords in Ireland. That, I am afraid, is no new information. We have known it all along, and for this reason, that there are always some black sheep in every flock. It is unfortunately true, no one here has attempted to deny it, that there are a certain number of landlords in Ireland who do not perform their duty ; but I must remind the right hon. gentleman that that is equally true of the possessors of every other kind of property in the world, and I certainly never heard before that that supplied a reason for mulcting the property of the great majority who do perform their duty. (Hear.) And that is the case with the great majority of the Irish landlords we know, from the high authority of the Minister himself—for he told us that they had been

tried and honourably acquitted—and really, if doctrines of this nature are in future to prevail, I cannot imagine where they are to stop (hear, hear), or what is to prevent the extension of this kind of argument to the partial confiscation of all kinds of property whatever. I cannot admit that the third and final reason of the right hon. gentleman affords sufficient justification for the introduction of this Bill. But, Sir, with regard to the first two reasons he gave us, I must say I think that the right hon. gentleman does stand on stronger ground when he tells us that the Land Act is defective, and points to the land hunger in the country as the rooted and the standing evil which demands legislation at our hands. Sir, it is undoubtedly too true that the Land Act so far has failed almost entirely to fulfil its objects. And why? Because that measure proceeded, if I may presume to say so, in the wrong direction from the outset. That Act erred not only in what it did, but even more perhaps in what it left undone, and it therefore failed, as it was doomed to fail, and as many people always said it would and must fail from the first. A policy of spoliation and injustice, I cannot, and I won't believe is ever really successful in the long run; and that Act was founded on injustice and nothing else, when it took the property of one class and transferred it to another class without the smallest compensation being made. (Hear, hear.) For instance, when the principle of compensation for disturbance was made a leading and vital principle of that measure—and here I would like to correct what I think is a wide-spread misapprehension on this point. I have heard it said that the Conservative Party as a whole accepted the principle of compensation for disturbance on the second reading of that Bill. They did nothing of the kind. Compensation for disturbance was not in the Bill at the time of the second reading—at all events not in our view (hear), not in our view of the Bill as it came before us on the second reading; but when it was altered in Committee, and amendments were moved by the Government to make the principle of compensation for disturbance as clear as it is in the measure now before us, then by vote, and speech, and division, and every means in their power, it was opposed by the Conservative Party as a whole. (Hear, hear.) But I said that Act was worse even in what it left undone, and there are, I think, hon. members on both sides of the House who will agree with me in this, that it must have been conceived in error, and in total ignorance of the real interests of Ireland, when not the least attempt was made to grapple or deal with (I doubt if it was even recognized) what has been so often spoken of as the "cancer" of the country, the acknowledged and undoubted source of nearly all its evils, viz., that frightful competition for the land which arises entirely out of the circumstances and peculiar conditions of the country. In 1870 the right hon. gentleman said we take the facts and circumstances of Ireland as we find them, and there, I think, with all respect, the right hon. gentleman was wrong. That was the cardinal blot of his Bill, when not the least attempt was made to deal with the evils arising from the competition for the land, and the consequence was that the circumstances of Ireland proved stronger than the Bill, and because he took them

as he found them and left them as he found them they have rendered the provisions of the Bill for the most part practically useless and of no effect. (Cheers.) It is generally admitted, I think, on both sides of the House, that in discussing the Irish question one fact must always be kept in mind, and that is that, apart from the land of Ireland, there are few, if any, other means of subsistence for the population, and consequently there has always been for its possession an excessive and an unnatural demand. This, again, has led to most serious abuses, including nearly all those constant causes of trouble and complaint we are for ever hearing of in Ireland. The commonest of all is this, that the rent is constantly being arbitrarily raised. But admitting, for argument's sake, that it is so, let me ask the House what it is that enables the bad landlord to profit by his greed and exercise his power? It is the competition for the land, and that alone, which, if one man will not give the rent, always induces another to come forward and take his place. (Hear.) The same thing accounts for the extravagant prices we hear of as being given for tenant right. We were told by one witness before the Agricultural Commission, of the case of one estate, and it was said to be by no means an uncommon one, where the lowest price given for the tenant right was 20 where it averaged 40, and where, in one case, it had been known to reach the incredible sum of 63 years' purchase of the rent, or considerably more than the value of the fee-simple of the land itself, irrespective of all considerations of tenant right altogether. Why, what a monstrous and intolerable state of things this is. Again, I ask, what is it owing to? Certainly not to the greed and rapacity of the landlord in this case, because it could only have happened on an estate where the most unlimited right of free sale was in existence already, and where there is perfect freedom from all office rules, which it is fashionable now to call objectionable, but which I must say, for my own part, in a case of this kind, I should be disposed to speak of as of the most necessary and salutary character. It is owing to the same competition for the land, and nothing else. The same thing accounts for the overcrowding of the population in certain districts of the country, which the Chief Secretary for Ireland spoke of, in almost the closing sentence of his speech the other night, as the greatest evil of the country. And it accounts as well for the subdivision of their farms into miserable little plots of land, many of which, were they let rent free, would not enable the tenant to obtain a decent livelihood. (Hear.) And when I have mentioned the minute sub-division of the farms, the overcrowding of the population in certain districts of the country, the extravagant prices given for tenant right, the arbitrary raising of the rent, and, still more, perhaps, the fear that it may be arbitrarily raised, I think that I have named nearly all the most prominent of the causes of disaffection and discontent in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) It is easy, therefore, to perceive why the Land Act failed so completely as it did. Instead of trying to devise some other means of livelihood for the population, instead of trying to divert their attention as far as possible from these miserable little plots of land, to which, I fully admit, with a feeling with

which we must all sympathize, many of them are passionately attached, it linked them more inseparably than ever to the soil. (Cheers.) It made the occupation of the land more to be desired and more to be coveted than ever, by giving to the tenant a share in its possession which did not belong to him before, and instead of lessening the competition it tended rather to aggravate and to increase it. It afforded in consequence fresh opportunities to landlords who desired to do so to raise the rents; it stimulated and encouraged still more extravagant payments for tenant right, and instead of doing anything whatever to promote a wise and judicious consolidation of the worst and most miserable holdings, by inflicting the fine of compensation for disturbance, it made that process more expensive and more difficult, and in many cases impossible for ever. (Cheers.) Now, that I believe to be a fair and not inaccurate description of the working and effects of the Land Act of eleven years ago. And that being so, and competition for the land being, as I say, the great evil of the country, is the Bill now before us likely to be more successful than its predecessor? Well, Sir, I will say at once that in some respects I think that perhaps it may. (Hear.) It differs from the Land Act of 1870 in this, that the land hunger at all events is recognized, and there is some evidence in the Bill of a real intention and desire to deal with it and so far as these parts of the Bill are concerned, we have some reason to hope that perhaps it may be. But the Bill is of so varied and so intricate a character that I must ask the House to allow me to consider it under three distinct heads, each one of which would form, in my opinion, the subject of a Bill itself. In the first place there are the clauses by which it is intended in the future to govern the relations between the landlords and tenants in Ireland, and these I shall call, for the sake of distinction—not from any wish to use the words offensively, but because I think that they most accurately describe their real effects—the confiscation clauses of the Bill. (Cheers and laughter.) Then there are the clauses by which it is intended to convert those who are tenants into owners of the land, and these may be fittingly described as the proprietary clauses of the Bill; and, lastly, there are the clauses by which it is intended to deal with the evils arising from land hunger, such as the clauses relating to the reclamation o land and emigration, and these, I think, may very properly be termed the remedial clauses of the Bill, because they seem to me to be by far the most important in their probable permanent effect on the condition of the country. Let me, therefore, take the remedial clauses first. And here, I think, it must be evident to all that if we are really in earnest in our desire to go to the root of the whole question, we must begin by doing something to lessen the competition for the land and to relieve the overcrowding of the population in certain districts. That, in my opinion, is the starting point of all, without which, whatever reforms you may adopt, you may be certain will be rendered practically useless and of no effect as long as you allow the state of things in the West of Ireland to continue as it does. But, if they are to be relieved, it is equally clear that some of the

people must be moved (hear), and then comes the question, how are we to move them, and where are we to move them to? It would be too inhuman and too barbarous to turn these poor unhappy people out of their present homes, wretched and miserable though they be, until you first provide for some improvement, and, I hope, some real improvement, in their hard and in their bitter lot. I will be no party to turning them adrift to find their way across the Atlantic or elsewhere for themselves. But there are now-a-days facilities for schemes, which, if adopted, by emigration or other means, would confer great benefits on one and all. And however distasteful it may be, and however much they may be disapproved of and disliked by those who live by agitation in that country, by the professional politician, to whom continued agitation in Ireland is as the very breath of life, and whose occupation and whose means of livelihood, in many cases wrung from his wretched dupes, would be gone without it, there is no real and no true friend of Ireland who can deny that, in their proposals for emigration, the Government have taken a step, and a long step, in the right direction. (Cheers.) However, I cannot, on the second reading of a Bill like this, enter into the details of any scheme of emigration. There may be difficulties, no doubt, but they are by no means insuperable, and to those who have been enabled to make themselves acquainted with the views and opinions of men competent to form an opinion on the subject —men, for instance, like Lord Dufferin, who has enjoyed peculiar facilities in arriving at a judgment on the merits of Irish emigration, both in our colonies and at home; like Mr. Tuke and others, who have written or have spoken on it,—there cannot be a question, or a doubt, that a scheme of emigration, properly organized, and conducted with due and proper safeguards made for the reception of the emigrants, and for starting them upon their new career on their arrival with their families, would confer a blessing and untold boon, not only upon those who go, but on those as well who stay behind. (Hear.) But I would not stop at emigration, and at that alone; I should like myself to offer to these people an alternative as well, namely, that of migration to other parts of Ireland. In fact, to give them the choice between emigration and migration, wherever it was possible, and wherever land could be reclaimed with advantage for that purpose. I cannot give my adhesion to the scheme proposed by the honourable member who sat near me the other night, that the grazing lands of Ireland should be purchased, broken up, and adapted for the purpose. To me, it seems that to require that the grazing lands should be cut up in the worst and most inconvenient manner, for the purpose of affording means of livelihood to the surplus population, would be as wise as to require that machinery and all the modern improvements of science should be banished from our manufactories to give employment to the surplus population in our towns. (Cheers.) But, with regard to reclamation of land and migration to those parts of Ireland, I may say that nothing was more strongly urged by witnesses before the Agricultural Commission, who, I believe, were thoroughly competent to give evidence and form opinions on that subject, than the advantages and the necessity of providing for the surplus population of the West, by an

offer of migration as well as emigration from the country, and I hope that the Government, if amendments should be moved in that direction, will see their way to accept them, in order to enlarge their scheme as far as migration is concerned. (Hear.) Now, Sir, I suppose it would be out of place in a discussion on a Land Bill if I said anything as to the establishment or re-establishment of manufacturing industries in Ireland. I was struck by something that fell from the Chancellor of the Duchy the other night on this point. No doubt Ireland does possess exceptional advantages in water power which might be turned to great advantage, and I cannot think that any reforms or remedial legislation that may be adopted can be considered satisfactory or complete which does not include encouragement, and, if necessary, assistance for the re-establishment of some of those industries in Ireland which in former days were destroyed by the bitterly unjust and selfish policy of England. (Cheers.) Well, now, Sir, I come to the proprietary clauses of the Bill, the darling project, I presume, of the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy—his *beau ideal* of rural happiness and prosperity not only in Ireland, but, I believe, throughout the world. Now I quite admit the social and political importance of adding largely, if possible, to the number of owners of land in Ireland at the present time, but I do not think that your Bill is in the least degree happily designed for the accomplishment of that object. All I can say is this, that if I had to choose between the position of an occupier or owner, a landlord or a tenant under this Bill, I should not hesitate for an instant in taking the position of the tenant. (Cheers.) I cannot conceive what is to induce people to become owners of land under this Bill which you have brought forward. But at the same time I am not indisposed to give a fair trial to the experiment of the right hon. gentleman. Still I must remind the House that it is a great experiment, and I cannot share his sanguine expectations as to the result. I am not speaking now of the enormous liabilities and risks you are about to impose on the taxpayers of the country. And remember that is a subject in itself of importance that cannot be over-rated. What you are going to do is this. You are going to make the State the chief and greatest landlord in Ireland at a time when the whole institution of landlordism is being violently denounced and assailed. But I am looking more to its future effects on the condition of the people and the fertility of the land itself; and I should like to ask the right hon. gentleman what precedents and what experience has he for his guidance? I was disappointed with the speech of the Chancellor of the Duchy the other night. He told us, from despatches he quoted, that vast numbers of the serfs in Russia had been converted into owners of the soil, and that a large proportion had repaid the money they borrowed to repurchase the land. But why did he not say something of their condition at the present time? Was he ignorant of their condition, or was it that he knew that a statement of their condition would tell against his proposals? I was reading a remarkable article the other day bearing on this question. It gives a description of the Russian serfs, now owners of the land in Russia, well worthy the attention of the House, and what it says is

this: "From one end of the country to the other the so-called peasant proprietors—that Radical idea of the agrarian status—are in a state of semi-starvation, while in several of the Volga provinces, once the richest in agricultural produce, the starvation has assumed the form of a wide-spread famine, which the Government is engaged in alleviating by considerable grants of money. This calamity has not overtaken the country casually and without warning. It has been approaching systematically for the last ten years, and cannot be ascribed in any important degree to the simple visitation of God or the operation of abnormal climatic phenomena." Well, now, Sir, the evidence given with regard to the purchase of land in Ireland under the Bright clauses, as they were called, or from the Church lands, is of a most conflicting character; but I should like to ask the right hon. gentleman whether he looks to any other foreign countries and the systems that prevail there. If he does, all I can say is this, that the evidence that it has been the duty of the Agricultural Commission to take on this point does not warrant that conclusion, but rather the reverse. (Cheers.) But it is not necessary to look abroad at all. We have experience much nearer home. It is an entire mistake to suppose that there is no peasant proprietary in England. (Hear.) In the county I represent there are hundreds—thousands of freeholders and peasant proprietors at the present time. Vast tracts of country, vast areas of land—I am not speaking solely of the Isle of Axholme, but on the east coast of Lincolnshire, between the Humber and the Wash, you will find vast tracts of country peopled to a great extent, if not exclusively, by them. And I have seen and I know something of the lot of these people for myself, and I will say at once, from my experience of them, that a more exemplary and industrious, a more deserving and hard-working class does not exist in England. I wish to Heaven I could say the same of their prosperity. But, alas! with them, Sir, at the present time, prosperity and comfort are unknown; their work is harder and their fare is worse than that of any labouring man in England. But, notwithstanding this, and all their efforts, and all their admirable conduct, many of them—aye, far too many of them,—for they are a class that I should wish to see increased,—have been utterly undone by an unhappy combination of unfavourable seasons and the relentless foreign competition which for some years now they have been called upon to undergo. The complaint of even those who have been able to bring them to maturity is this, that their crops make nothing, and that ruin stares them in the face; and their lot is harder far than that of either labourer or tenant for another reason too, which I commend to honourable gentlemen opposite, below the gangway, who are always ready to denounce and to declaim against the territorial system of this country, and it is this, you may rest assured that the mortgagee at all times will demand the punctual payment of his interest far more sternly than the landlord ever does, or, in unfavourable seasons, ever did demand the punctual payment of his rent. (Cheers.) In this distressing and deplorable state of affairs the land is steadily losing its fertility and, *pari passu* with its owners, is going rapidly

from bad to bad, and from worse to worse. And if this is what is happening in England, why are you to expect such a very different and so much more favourable results in Ireland? The fact is, and I often think it is the irony of fate, that it is the right hon. gentleman himself more than any other man in England who has rendered a successful peasant proprietary, as I believe, in this country impossible in future. There were yeomen, and there were peasants too, who flourished at one time in considerable numbers in this country; but they have disappeared in a great degree, and much to my regret, as I regard the class of yeomen as a class we can ill afford to lose, and one that it will be still more difficult to replace. But they have disappeared and died out in a great degree; and they did so for the most part with the advent of free trade. Now, I am not going to say one word against free trade to-night but this. It may be a very good thing in its way; no doubt it has been, and a peasant proprietary may be the same. No doubt they are both of them excellent things in their way, but you may depend upon this, that, under existing commercial conditions, the two things cannot flourish in England together. (Hear, hear.) And, as I suppose, the Chancellor of the Duchy is not at present prepared to part with free trade, or to occupy that suite of apartments in certain public establishments in this country which he is always ready, I observe, to offer to those of his friends who make that proposal, I am afraid that he must give up for the present his dream of a peasant proprietary in Ireland. That, however, is only my opinion. I do not presume to dogmatise upon it, nor to offer, more or less perhaps, a crude opinion of my own, to the views of the right hon. gentleman who, I understand, has made a life-long study of this question; but I have ventured, and indeed I have thought, it my duty to place this view of the case, which I have seen something of myself, before the House of Commons, because it does seem to me to be one that is deserving of our most careful and serious consideration, before we finally adopt proposals of enormous importance, like those which have been put forward by the right hon. gentleman. At the same time, although I cannot share his sanguine views, and while I must decline all responsibility for them, I should not feel either justified or right in refusing, at all events, a fair trial of his scheme. Sir, the House will then perceive that while I am prepared to give a qualified assent to what I have called the proprietary clauses of the Bill, I go heartily and completely with the Government, perhaps I go further than the Government in what I take to be the remedial portion of this measure, and specially intended to deal with that which the right hon. gentleman himself has described as the old and rooted evil of land hunger in the country. But when I come to what I have described as the confiscation clauses of the Bill, there, I am afraid, I must adopt a very different attitude indeed. I am quite aware that hon. members on that side of the House are sometimes apt to be indifferent to charges of confiscation, especially when made by hon. members on this side. But that is not the case with the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister. He takes quite a different line. He stoutly denied the other night that there was any confiscation under the Act of 1870, and he has challenged us to prove that there is confiscation in the Bill

of 1881. And further, he supported his statement as to the Act of 1870 by alleging that, according to statistics, rents have risen, and with the rise of rents the value of property which has been sold in Ireland has been increased since the passing of the Act of 1870. Now, even supposing that allegation is correct, it does not necessarily prove that he is right. It is the natural tendency of everything in these days, as years roll by, to increase in value, because gold has been daily becoming more plentiful; and what we have to consider is not whether land in Ireland has increased at all in value within the last decade, but whether the increase would not have been considerably greater if it had not been for the passing of the Land Act eleven years ago. That is, supposing this allegation is correct. But is the right honourable gentleman correct? The right hon. gentleman gave us no statistics the other night, but he did give us some last Session, I remember, in regard to this question. They stopped, however, with the year 1878. Why did they stop there? Why has he not given us statistics down to the year 1881? They would have thrown considerable light on his assertions. I have not myself been able to obtain statistics for 1881; I have not had time to do so. I had no idea, for a moment, that such an argument would be advanced; but it so happens that I have some statistics that were sent to me from Ireland last Session, in regard to the year 1880, and I will read three cases which bear directly on the value of land. They are taken from sales in the Land Court, before Judge Flanagan, and the date is June 25th, 1880, not quite a year ago. "Lot one, 563 acres; yearly rent, £180; sale adjourned, there being no bidding. Lot three, 42 acres; yearly rent, £85; the only bid £500; sale adjourned. Lot four, 387 acres of the lands of Molloy, producing a yearly rent of £156 9s.; Mr. T. McCreedy, solicitor, offered £2,000. There was no other bid, and after waiting for some time, Judge Flanagan said: "It is a perfect farce to be putting property up for sale now. For all I know, Mr. McCreedy, you may get it for half £2,000 next year. No mortal man can tell. Your bidding, however, is not quite 12 years' purchase." Now, Sir, I do not know what the statistics of 1881 may say, but if they at all bear out the records of sales in the Land Court in the year before, I think the House will agree with me that the right hon. gentleman has certainly not disproved the charge of confiscation against the Act of 1870 by the singularly unfortunate illustration he has selected upon this occasion. The right hon. gentleman challenged us to give him proof of confiscation in the Bill which is now before us. Perhaps I may be allowed to offer to the House a short and simple definition of what I mean by "confiscation." And if the House accepts my definition, and if I am able to show, as I think I shall be able to show, that it is strictly applicable to this part of the Bill, I may at least hope that some hon. or right hon. gentleman opposite will do me the favour to attempt, at all events, to meet the arguments I shall use, and failing that, to acknowledge the truth and justice of my complaint. Now, what does "confiscation" mean? I understand confiscation to mean this: We are guilty of confiscation if we take away property or valuable rights which at present they enjoy from those who are

entitled to them, without making compensation to them for the property or the rights of which they are deprived. Will any hon. member on the other side of the House deny that proposition? If not, then I wish to ask the House this question. Does or does not the Bill perform that operation? I think I can undertake to show in the course of about three minutes that it does. Take the cases of present tenancies alone, where tenant-right did not exist before. What happens under this Bill? The day this Bill passes every tenant will be able to take his landlord into Court, and, whether his rent be a high rent or a low rent, to call upon the Court to fix it in future. If the tenant once goes into Court, the Court is bound to fix the rent, and it becomes, in future, in the language of the Bill, a "judicial rent." Thereupon, a judicial rent being established in that way, the farm from that time forth is held subject to what are called the "statutory conditions" of the Bill; these "statutory conditions" include fixity of tenure for 15 years for certain, and what practically amounts, as far as I can see, to as long a period afterwards as the tenant may desire. These "statutory conditions" really include fixity of tenure for 15 years for certain, and a renewal of fixity of tenure for successive periods of 15 years as long as the tenant may desire. It is really perpetuity of tenure if the tenant so desires. But "fixity of tenure," in the words of the Prime Minister in 1870, is virtually the "expropriation of the landlord!" It undoubtedly deprives him at once of all real control and management over his estate in future, and it deprives him of what may be called all the advantages and pleasures of ownership. It deprives him, in a word, of nearly every right you can mention that attaches to the possession of an estate in Ireland, excepting the receipt of whatever rent-charge the Court may think fit to allow him. Now, nobody can deny that these rights do possess a certain value, whether they be little or whether they be great, and you are going to take them from the landlord without giving him the smallest compensation whatever. I say, then, that if my definition of confiscation be correct, the fixity of tenure, as embodied in your Bill, even for a period of 15 years, is neither more nor less than sheer and simple confiscation. And that is not all; every tenant in future will have the right to sell his interest in his holding for the best price he can obtain; subject, I admit, to this limitation which the Prime Minister pointed out the other night, that the landlord may claim his right of pre-emption, and in that case he may call on the Court to fix the price of sale; but though the Court may be called on, in this way, to settle the price which the landlord is to give to the tenant for the tenant's interest in his own estate, a somewhat novel and remarkable state of things in itself, I do not understand that the Court may fix the price at zero; the Court, I understand, is bound to allow the tenant something for his interest, otherwise the right of sale, so ostentatiously paraded in the first line of your Bill, would be nothing but a farce. And if that be so, what is the landlord's position, if the tenant should elect to sell? If, for instance, the tenant wishes, for some cause, to give up farming and take to something else, the tenant will at once be able, however liberal may have been the

terms in point of rent or otherwise on which he has held the farm up to the time of sale, to realize a sum of money for an interest for which he gave absolutely nothing upon entry, and every penny of which is just so much taken directly out of the pocket of the landlord and deducted from the rent which he would otherwise receive from the tenant who succeeds him. (Cheers.) It makes no difference whatever to the tenant who comes in. In either case he will have to pay the same, either in increased rent, or in the shape of interest on the sum of money he pays for the goodwill; but the tenant who goes out, although he may have held the farm at the lowest of low rents, and on the most liberal terms for years, is to receive from the tenant who comes in a sum of money which, on every principle of right and of justice ever known, is the property of the landlord, and of no other person in the world. (Loud cheers.) You give him no compensation for this, and if my definition of confiscation is correct, and it is, I believe, generally accepted by the House, this, again, is nothing less than mere and sheer and simple confiscation. Let me test it on another and most simple ground. You are going to confer on the tenant a great boon—" a pecuniary advantage " you tell us. Where is it to come from? Does it come from the State? Out of whose pocket does it come? It comes out of the pocket of the landlord, and of nobody else. How do you get over that point? I hope, when the right hon. gentleman or some other member of the front bench comes to speak, he will be able to explain more clearly than has been done that this Bill does not embrace the principle of confiscation. Now, Sir, having shown, to the best of my ability, that they both mean confiscation, let me say a word as to the policy of fixity of tenure and free sale, as embodied in this Bill. " Free sale " may be summed up in a sentence. Free sale, however you may try to limit it—for whatever rules the Court may make will be evaded, just as office rules are evaded at the present time—free sale, I say, is only another word for rack rents everywhere in Ireland in future, and fixity of tenure is even worse, for fixity of tenure, in plain English, means taking the property of one man and giving it to another, and my authority for saying so is a member of the present Cabinet—the highest legal authority in England, Lord Selborne, the present Lord Chancellor, who said it as Sir Roundell Palmer in this House, at a time when he and his colleague, the right hon. gentleman, were fighting tooth and nail against this very principle, its advocate to-day. (Cheers.) Truly, what a marvellous specimen of policy and statesmanship this fixity of tenure is. What does everybody who knows anything about Ireland tell you is her first requirement at the present time? Why, capital, and the investment of capital in that country. And what sort of inducement do you think it is that you are offering to capital, and to those who are its owners, at the present time, when your own Lord Chancellor has told us that your great and grand specific for the troubles you are placed in at the present moment, and which you have so thoroughly brought upon yourselves, is, in plain English, taking the property of one man and giving it to another? Was there ever, out of Bedlam, such a policy

as this put forward by a Minister for the regeneration of Ireland before? (Cheers.) I pass on to consider what I understand to be the principle of this part of the Bill. The House will have observed that, although this Bill embodies what are known as the three F's, yet that fixity of tenure is contingent on judicial rent, and the right of sale is, to a certain extent, controlled by the power of the Court to fix and regulate the rent. I take it, therefore, and it has been admitted by more than one member of the Government—I take it, therefore, that judicial rent is the centre and pivot on which the remaining portion of this Bill must turn. In other words, the main principle of this part of the Bill is the valuation of rents by the State. That being so, I confess I listened with the utmost curiosity to the explanation of the Prime Minister on the introduction of this Bill, because it so happens that, in common with a good many other hon. members of this House, it was my good fortune some years ago to hear him discourse at great length on this very question, and I must do the right hon. gentleman the justice to say that a more complete, a more able, or a more elaborate destruction of the very principle he advocates to-day, I never heard from any other Minister or statesman on any other subject in the world. (Hear, hear.) It is far too long to quote, but it is very instructive and most interesting to read. (Cries of "Read.") I have not got it here, and therefore I cannot read it, but hon. members who are desirous of doing so will find in vol. 199 of *Hansard*, beginning about the bottom of page 1,843, some five and a half columns of what appear to me to be absolutely unanswerable and conclusive arguments against the very proposition which forms to-day the main and the essential principle of this part of the Bill. I confess that I was not very much surprised, because since I have taken any part in public life I have noticed this—and I don't in the least wish to speak with any offence or disrespect towards the right hon. gentleman—but I have noticed this, that when he professes a policy most loudly it is always two to one—and that is far from being liberal odds—that, sooner or later, exactly the opposite is almost quite certain to occur. At all events that is what has happened upon this occasion.

Mr. GLADSTONE: Not at all; not at all.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Well, let the right hon. gentleman disprove it if he can; he will have every opportunity. But how does the right hon. gentleman account for it on this occasion? I listened with great attention to the speech of the right hon. gentleman on the introduction of the Bill, but the sole excuse and explanation I could gather from his speech was this—that in the present circumstances of Ireland, and with the authorities before us, this change had become quite inevitable. And what were his authorities? He did not condescend to tell why it was inevitable; but he told us what authorities he looked to. They were the rival and various reports of the two Royal Commissions. I have not a word to say to the report of the Bessborough Commission, or to the minority report of the Duke of Richmond's Commission, but I have a good deal to say as to the majority report of that Commission. The right hon. gentleman has placed a very remarkable construction upon that report. But in the first place

I would refer exactly to what he said the other night. He taxed me with being in some way connected with this Bill. The right hon. gentleman dwelt at great length, not only on Monday night, but on the first introduction of the Bill, on the report of the Duke of Richmond's Commission, and he quoted a single paragraph from that report at least twice or three times. I can assure him we are exceedingly complimented by the attention he has paid us, and here, again, I think that I perceive another of those complete conversions of opinion of which I spoke just now, as amiable, I must say, in this case, as it is complete, and which are so eminently characteristic of the right hon. gentleman. Last year the House will recollect the Richmond Commission was the grossest delusion that ever was practised on the mind of man. (Cheers.) This year it is a high and responsible authority to which the right hon. gentleman looks for guidance and direction, and the humblest of its members—the member for Mid-Lincolnshire—is indeed exalted to high honour, for he is suddenly informed that he shares with the Prime Minister the paternity of this Bill. (Cheers.) I cannot express to the right hon. gentleman my unbounded gratification at this complete change of sentiment on his part. I tender to him my grateful acknowledgments and thanks, but both natural modesty of disposition and my strict adhesion to truth compel me alike, I am afraid, to decline this signal mark of favour which he presses on me (laughter), and I hope he will not think me churlishly ungrateful if my desire to preserve whatever reputation and character I may still enjoy, either of a public or a private nature, impels me to renounce all connection whatever with what I suspect to be the disreputable offspring of an illicit amour of his own with the Land League (cheers), and which the right hon. gentleman, with an audacity—a happy audacity I have rarely seen equalled—is now trying to father upon me. (Cheers.) I really must protest altogether against this attempt on the part of the right hon. gentleman to father his own illegitimate child on me. (Laughter.) But now, Sir, in all seriousness, let me consider for a moment the construction which the right hon. gentleman has placed on the report of the Duke of Richmond's Commission. What is that construction ? I understand it to be this—that what we have recommended in effect is this, viz., the establishment of a Court, or of some other public authority, to regulate rents everywhere in Ireland in future. Now I venture respectfully to say that we have recommended nothing of the kind. All that we have said, and I adhere to every word that we have said, is this, that "bearing in mind"—I am afraid I shall have to read it again—"bearing in mind the system by which the improvements and equipments of a farm are very generally the work of the tenant, and the fact that a yearly tenant is at any time liable to have his rent raised in consequence of the increased value that has been given to his holding by the expenditure of his own capital and labour, the desire for legislative interference to protect him from an arbitrary increase of rent does not seem unnatural." Arbitrary increase of rent on what ? Why, on the expenditure of his own capital and labour. I think I should be content to submit to the verdict of any legal authority on either side of the House, and I

think they would pronounce unanimously in favour of my interpretation of that paragraph of that report. I do not know what might happen on that side, but I would certainly undertake to submit to the verdict of any legal authority on this side. And now let me ask the House, how does the right hon. gentleman arrive at this extraordinary construction? First, he quotes one single paragraph in the report, in which no mention of a Court is even made, and then he went on to tell the House that, in his view of the case, legislative interference with rent could not be disassociated from legislative interference with the right of sale and tenure. In other words, what he says is this: "If you take one of the three F's, viz., fair rent, you must take them all," and, having laid down that proposition, he then goes on to say that the language used by the Commission, and the necessary construction of the single parapraph he did read, must mean that and nothing else, when the very following paragraph of the report, which, for some reason best known to himself, he thought fit not to read, says, as I understand it, exactly the reverse. Remember the proposition of the right hon. gentleman is—"If you take one of the three F's you must take them all." And the following paragraph of the report of the Agricultural Commission says: "With a view of affording such security, 'fair rents,' 'fixity of tenure,' and 'free sale,' popularly known as the 'three F's,' have been strongly advocated by many witnesses, but none have been able to support these propositions in their integrity without admitting consequences that would, in our opinion, involve an injustice to the landlord." Well, now, that is the language of the report, and how the right hon. gentleman, in the face of that second paragraph, could have placed the construction which he did upon the report of the Duke of Richmond's Commission passes, I must say, altogether my humble, although it may be somewhat limited, comprehension. I frankly own, for my part, that I disapprove of the proposal altogether, because it always seemed to me that the valuation of rents by the state in Ireland, either with justice or with satisfaction to the interested parties, is neither practicable nor possible by any Court whatever in the world; and for the very reasons which were literally driven home by the right hon. gentleman himself at the time he utterly demolished that proposal when it was formerly brought forward in this House. (Cheers.) And I cannot understand how a Minister in this House can either ask or expect the House of Commons to accept proposals, until otherwise explained, of which he has publicly declared in this House, he could conceive nothing more calculated to carry wide-spread demoralization throughout the mass of the people of Ireland. (Cheers.) I admit that it is desirable that this question should be settled, and if on some other occasion the right hon. gentleman would do what I think he might do, and what I think he ought to do, to remove the difficulties which many of us feel, viz., take his own speech in 1870 and answer *seriatim*, if he can, the arguments he used on that occasion, then I can only say, as far as I am individually concerned, I shall be disposed to make large sacrifices of my opinion in order to arrive at a happy solution of this question. But, unless

that should be done, and until it has been done, I shall feel it my duty to oppose, from first to last, the adoption of these principles into our legislation, and for the very reasons that have never yet been answered, and which were supplied by the Prime Minister himself. (Cheers.) I object, then, altogether, both in point of policy and in principle, to this part of the Bill, and I view, I confess, with the utmost apprehension what seem to be its probable permanent effects. I agree with what the Prime Minister said in 1870, that it is calculated to demoralize the people. It cannot fail, I think, to lead to the establishment of rack rents everywhere in Ireland. It will destroy all confidence and all sense of security; nay, I think it has gone far already to destroy them in regard to all kinds of property in Ireland, and, with them, it will most inevitably banish capital and the investment of capital in that country. And, although I admit that it does confer enormous boons on one class of the country, namely, the present occupiers of land, it confers those boons upon them alone, and even this is done at the expense, and at the sole expense, of one other class of the community, namely, those who are the owners of the land in Ireland. And what kind of treatment is it that you ask us to inflict upon them? First, you are going to take away from him all interest in the future management of his estate. You deprive him of the rights, and you release him from all the duties which attach to property in Ireland, and you convert him in future to the position of a mere rent-charger on his own estate. And that is not all, for in all human probability you are going to inflict upon him a large pecuniary loss as well. Under this Bill you may lower his rents, mulct him of a portion of his income, and fine him of part of his possessions, bought, very likely, for anything that you know, on the faith of your public professions and inducements, and on the guarantee of a title which very likely Parliament has given him itself. A case was submitted to me the other day, which I may mention. A friend of mine, about a year ago, bought an estate for £30,000 in Ireland. He bought it in the Land Court. The rent was certified by the Judge, and endorsed upon the title as certified by the Judge. If you pass this Bill, and he is taken into court, you may reduce his rent by £200 or £300 a year.

Mr. BRIGHT: The rent was not guaranteed.

Mr. CHAPLIN: But the title was guaranteed, and what is the use of the title without rent? Does the right hon. gentleman suppose that people invest £30,000 in estates in Ireland to look at them? They invest as a means of interest, to receive something back as interest. And in this case it is possible that the rent may be reduced two or three hundred a year, and are you going to give the man to whom you have sold the estate yourselves compensation, or, failing that, are you not bound to re-purchase his estate on equitable terms? (Cheers.) It is the gravest possible question in my mind whether you are justified in doing this under any circumstances at all. It may, I know, be argued, I know it has been argued, that the State has the right to reduce him to that position if it thinks fit. But then the State is bound not so to

think fit until it has shown conclusively that it is for the public interest and welfare; and I do not think that you have done so. I admit that may be a matter of opinion, but this is not a matter of opinion, that whether you have shown that it is expedient or not, you are bound—there can be no question upon this point—to give him compensation. And I ask where, in what clause, what line or sentence of this Bill is there the smallest compensation mentioned? (Cheers.) You give none, and I say then there is only one description for measures of this nature—you tell us of judicial leases and judicial rents. I say, in the presence of the Government and of the authors of this Bill, that this part of your Bill is nothing else than one great scheme of judicial plunder (cheers)—more worthy, I had almost said, of a Cabinet of—but I will not use the expression that I had upon my tongue—of anything rather than of Ministers of State. And all this harsh and cruel treatment of the landlord is to be inflicted on him—why? Because, you tell us, that the circumstances of Ireland absolutely call for legislation at your hands. Granted that it be so. I acknowledge that the present circumstances of Ireland must be dealt with sooner or later. I do not stop to enquire who it is that has brought Ireland into that position, though it would not be difficult to show. (Hear hear.) But why inflict all these pains and penalties on the landlords? They are not responsible for the circumstances of Ireland. They did not create that fatal competition for the land which is the cause of nearly all the evils you complain of. (Hear.) They are not to blame for the absence of manufactures, and of other industries in Ireland, which has driven the people to the land, and to the land alone, as their resource. Nothing of the kind, and no one knows it better, I suspect, than the Prime Minister himself. And if we really want to know the truth upon this question, and if we have the courage and the candour to acknowledge it to ourselves, we must look—not to the landlord element in Ireland, but to a very different cause indeed, to find the source of that which I admit is perhaps the most perplexing problem of the time. The truth is that the English Parliament and the English people are mainly responsible for those conditions of the country which have driven the people to the land, and to the land alone, for their support. (Hear, hear.) It was not always so; there were other industries in Ireland in former days, which flourished, and flourished to a considerable extent,—until they first aroused, and were afterwards suppressed, by the selfish fears and the commercial jealousy of England; England, who was alarmed at a rivalry and competition that she dreaded at the hands and from the resources and energy of the Irish people. The history of what happened at that time is so admirably given in a series of letters published about 100 years ago, in a little volume called "The Commercial Restraints of Ireland," that, with the permission of the House, I should like just for one moment to refer to it. I know of nothing more painful in the whole history of Ireland, or more calculated to bring a blush to the face of every Englishman than the plain unvarnished tale they tell. (Hear.) What happened, in a word, was this. Petitions

were presented to the King, by both Houses of Parliament, in the year 1698, praying him, by every means in his power, to hinder the woollen trade of Ireland. One single passage from the petition of the Commons will sufficiently explain their nature. This is what it said: "And we do most humbly implore your Majesty's protection and favour in this matter, and that you may make it your Royal care, and enjoin all those you employ in Ireland to make it their care, and use their utmost diligence to hinder the exportation of wool from Ireland, except to be imported hither, and for the discouraging the woollen manufactures and encouraging the linen manufactures in Ireland, to which we shall always be ready to give our assistance." This address was presented to the King, and the answer was explicit. It was this: "I shall do all that in me lies to discourage the woollen trade in Ireland, and to encourage the linen manufactures there, and to promote the trade of England." (Hear.) Now, Sir, what followed upon this? A Bill had already received the Royal assent on the 25th January of that year, by which large additional duties were imposed on the exportation of all woollen goods from Ireland. But this was not sufficient to satisfy the English Parliament, and, in the words of the same writer, a perpetual law was made prohibiting the exportation of all goods made or mixed with wool, except into England and Wales, and as duties amounting to prohibition had been already imposed on the importation into England, this measure practically operated as a complete prohibition of the exportation of woollen goods from Ireland. The immediate effects of this cruel law cannot be described better than they are depicted by the same historian, in two pictures which he draws of Ireland before and after the passing of this law. Before the passing of this law, he says: "After the Restoration, from the time that the Acts of Settlement and Explanation had been fully carried into execution, to the year 1688, Ireland made great advances, and continued for several years in a most prosperous condition. Lands were everywhere improved, rents were doubled, the kingdom abounded with money, trade flourished, to the envy of our neighbours; cities increased exceedingly, many places of the country equalled the improvements of England, the King's revenue increased proportionally to the advance of the kingdom, which was every day growing, and was well established in plenty and wealth; manufactures were set on foot in divers parts; the meanest inhabitants were at once enriched and civilized, and this kingdom is then represented to be the most improved and improving spot of ground in Europe." How happily does this contrast with the state of Ireland to-day. But no sooner was that fatal policy accepted than a change indeed came over the spirit of the dream, and what we learn of Ireland afterwards is this: "The consequences of this prohibition appear in the Session of 1703. The Commons lay before Queen Anne a most affecting representation containing, to use their own words, 'a true state of our deplorable condition;' they set forth the vast decay and loss of its trade, its being almost exhausted of coin; that they are hindered from earning their livelihoods and from maintaining their own manufactures; that their poor are thereby become very numerous; that great numbers of Protestant families

have been constrained to remove out of the kingdom, as well into Scotland as into the dominions of foreign princes and States." I make no comments on these statements. Their simple and pathetic eloquence speaks, I think, Sir, for itself. (Hear.) The Chancellor of the Duchy the other night spoke of the confiscations in Ireland in past ages, and he traced the miseries of Ireland, in great degree, to them. But these confiscations, I must remind him, occurred before, not after the glowing picture of prosperity that I have given. Her condition, therefore, cannot fairly be ascribed to those confiscations to which he alluded, and I am convinced that it is in the history of these cruel laws that lies the secret of that fatal competition for the land in which, and it may well be a just retribution upon us, the source of all the troubles and the difficulties that you have to deal with will be found. (Hear.) And now I want to ask this question. Were the Irish landlords guilty of these cruel laws? Can even the English landlords be said to have been mainly instrumental in their passing? I don't know, I'm sure, how far the latter can be called upon to bear their share of blame. I have read, I am afraid, of laws that prevented the exportation of cattle into England to prevent the rents of grazing lands in England going down, and I suspect, if all the truth be known, they cannot be acquitted of their share of selfishness as well. But this I do know, that the men who were mainly responsible for the passing of these cruel laws were the great manufacturers and traders of that day in England, men belonging to a class whom I see so largely represented in the benches opposite to me to-night. (Cheers and laughter.) They were, in fact, and I may say this without offence, as I am sure that no offence whatever is intended, they were the Forsters, the Chamberlains, and the Brights of that day and time (hear, and laughter), and it is reserved for their successors in 1881, the successors of a class who fattened and grew rich for ages on the proceeds of a trade, which, to her misery and ruin, they first destroyed in Ireland. It is reserved, I say, for them to call upon the Parliament of England in 1881, in their loudest tones of spurious justice and of spurious generosity, to make atonement for the sins and for the crimes of the whole British nation by inflicting yet another and a mortal blow on one class of the Irish people; on one class of the community in Ireland. (Loud cheers). Sir, I will be no party to any measure of reparation of hypocrisy like this. If you really wish to make to Ireland reparation for the sins of Ireland at your own cost and for yourselves, then I will go with you almost any length you please, but I will not go one step along the path you ask the House to tread, nor assist you in this travestie of justice—this cheap and mock generosity at other people's cost, which, I believe, will bring upon you nothing but the scorn of all justice-loving people in the world. (Cheers.) And now, Sir, what should be our course to-night. Whatever may have been the case before, and I never had a doubt myself since I mastered the provisions of this Bill, the speech of the right hon. gentleman on Monday night has made it absolutely clear. The Government are pledged to give no compensation to the landlords. They deny confiscation, and they repudiate compensation. They must expect, in consequence,

from us a prolonged, determined, and a bitter opposition to the Bill. (Cheers.) I know not whether it is to be the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill, but if it be not that it is to be the very essence of the Bill which he now demands; our fortunes as a Government, he says, and our Bill shall sink or swim together. In God's name, I say, then let them sink. (Cheers.) I see little hope myself for Ireland, except in this, that this measure and its authors should perish and be swept away together. (Cheers.) In twelve short months they have reduced that country from a state which they themselves described as one of comfort and satisfaction, which was never known before, to the Pandemonium of to-day. (Cheers.) For my part I care not in the least how soon the time may come, and I am persuaded that the country, thoroughly deluded and misled by the Prime Minister at the general election, is rapidly beginning to entertain the same opinion too. Nor do I feel quite sure that the Prime Minister himself is altogether free from foreboding of that nature. (Cheers.) Why did he turn to the most timid of his followers behind, who are always to be found amongst the Whigs, and warn them that if by any combination this measure were rejected, a larger and more sweeping measure would be carried by the Opposition? What guarantee have we that if you pass this Bill to-day yourselves, you will not bring in a larger and more sweeping measure in two years time? I recommend that, Sir, to the consideration of hon. gentlemen who sit behind the Prime Minister to-day. Sir, the right hon. gentleman has reminded me with perfect truth that I cannot claim to speak as a representative member of the party on this side of the House. Were it otherwise I would meet his challenge, and reply that in one sense what he says is true. Ireland should have, and quickly too, if I could have my way, a measure which would be both a larger and a smaller one as well; larger in everything that would conduce to the permanent removal of the source of all her ills, but smaller, infinitely smaller, in respect of all your revolutionary schemes. (Cheers.) Sir, I have placed an amendment on the paper which expresses my own views on the question, and had it been in my power I should have pressed it to a division and taken the sense of the House upon it. But the forms of the House will not admit of that proceeding. I shall therefore give my vote in favour of whatever amendment is put by Mr. Speaker from the chair, in order to record my protest against the principles contained in this part of your Bill; and I am more than ever strengthened and confirmed in this intention by the deep conviction which I entertain as to the real causes of the introduction of this Bill. I challenged the reasons of the right hon. gentleman at the beginning of my speech, and I will make good that challenge before I bring my observations to a close. I said that they could not be the real and only reasons for this Bill, because every one of these three reasons which he gave us—the land hunger, the defective nature of the Land Act of 1870, and the limited number of bad landlords—would have been just as good a reason and possessed as much force as an argument for the introduction of this Bill, any time you liked to mention—five years ago, three years ago, two years, or one year ago, as it has to-day; and yet if anyone had gone to the Prime Minister eighteen months

ago and told him that a Bill of this tremendous character was called for by the necessities of Ireland, he would have scouted the idea and laughed the person who proposed or who suggested it to scorn. And he would have pointed for his answer to his remedial legislation of ten years ago, and to the improved and contented condition of the people of Ireland. This is no mere fancy or supposition upon my part; on the contrary, it is almost exactly what the Prime Minister actually did. (Hear, hear.) Let me remind the House of a most remarkable statement which he made about fourteen months ago. I see it was on the 1st April, 1880; not a very inappropriate day in the light of subsequent events. (Laughter.) He was speaking at the Liberal Club in Edinburgh in reference especially to the Act of 1870, and the condition of the people, and this is what he said: "The change," he said, "which had been made in the Land Laws was a just change, and gave a confidence to the cultivator of the soil which he never had before. . . . The cultivation of Ireland had been carried on for the last eight years under the cover and shelter of the Land Laws, with a sense of security on the part of the occupier; with a feeling that he was sheltered and protected by the law; . . . . with a general sense of comfort and satisfaction such as was unknown in the previous history of the country." (Laughter.) I quite admit that this statement was made at a time before the right hon. gentleman had been brought directly in contact with the latest phases of Irish agitation and obstruction in this House, and it may be while he was still under the impression that the comparative quiet maintained in Ireland since the passing of his Land Act by a succession of coercive measures which only expired last June was in reality owing to the beneficial effects of his previous legislation. If that was ever his impression it must have been rudely and speedily dispelled, for the new Parliament had scarcely met when he became alive to the difficulties he had to encounter from Irish agitation and obstruction. And how did he encounter them? Concession became at once the order of the day, and sop after sop was thrown to the party of agitation. The Peace Preservation Act was not renewed, and in consequence you have had—as you were warned by us you would have—to suspend the constitution of the country. Then came the weak, the temporising, and, as I thought and pointed out at the time, the misleading speech of the Chief Secretary, in answer to the proposition of the hon. member for Mayo for an *ad interim* Bill to suspend the power of eviction for two years. That was followed by the sudden announcement of the appointment of the Royal Commission to enquire into the working of the Land Act. And then came the attempt to smuggle through the House an Irish Land Bill in the form of a single clause in the Relief of Distress Bill; but that was stopped by a member of this House, who, in common with the great majority of gentlemen on both sides, naturally objected to an important measure of this kind being scrambled through the House of Commons in that way by a side wind. Then we had the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, which is still fresh in the recollection of the House. And now, after twelve months of open defiance of

the law in Ireland, we have these sweeping and extravagant proposals, proposals which concede to the breakers of the law the bulk of everything they have demanded, and which differ little, if at all, as far as I can see, from those schemes of public plunder which the Prime Minister himself so unsparingly denounced, except, indeed, in this particular—that the Government give no compensation to the landlords; and which certainly was included in every scheme which has been either suggested or attributed to the member for the city of Cork. (Hear, hear.) No, Sir; let the truth be known. This Bill, whatever its merits or demerits may be, is one great measure of concession to Irish agitation; it is the triumph of violence and crime over law and order in that country. If credit there be, let the credit be given where credit is due. And much as I differ from him in his political opinions, and much as I abhor, for the most part, his views, I must say the daring and persistence of the man has met with more than its reward. For rest assured that the people know full well in Ireland to-day, what every member of the House of Commons in his heart and in his conscience knows is nothing but the naked truth, that without this Irish agitation and obstruction through which we have passed this measure never would have seen the light, and that it has been wrung, not from the long settled conviction or the policy, but from the weakness and the fears of the Ministry, by the revolutionary policy of the member for Cork. (Loud cheers.) Now I ask the House of Commons where is all this to end? Don't suppose that even if you pass this Bill to-day, unaltered as it is, you will put an end to disaffection in that country. You have surely learnt something from your experience in the past; as it was in 1870, be assured it will be in 1881. Confiscation and concession then are only followed by larger and by more extended measures in the same direction now—and the acceptance of your policy to-day will simply mean new concessions and still greater confiscations a little later on. So evil is the lesson which your weakness and your concessions will have taught them, that the ink will not be dry which makes judicial rent the law throughout the land before a new and more determined agitation will arise from the ashes of the old one against the intolerable injustice of paying any rent at all. (Cheers.) And all past experience will have taught them that if it only be conducted with sufficient violence and outrage in the long run they are sure to win. And then, I fear, that we shall see the same humiliating spectacle again. A weak, divided, and distracted Cabinet at home, a helpless Lord-Lieutenant, a paralyzed Executive, and a trembling Secretary in Ireland, making more and more concessions, till at last, with what you call the English garrison, in other words the most loyal portion of the population driven out, you will find you have to choose between the armed suppression of the people and the country on the one hand, and on the other the secession, either attempted or accomplished, of Ireland from England. The great statesman who has gone, to whom the Prime Minister the other night paid a tribute the nobility of which I can assure him that we who sit on this side of the House, for the sake of the affection that we bore our leader and our chief, shall not easily forget. He warned you of the certain and the fatal

end of the policy you then began. I ventured to remind the House of his striking prophecies so literally fulfilled in one of our debates last Session. You would not hear his words at the time when they were spoken. You only laughed and knocked when I quoted them last Session. Is it too late, even now, to heed the silent voice which warns you from his grave? Will the Liberal Party never learn wisdom from experience? Remember you have tried your hands already at Irish legislation on these disastrous principles before, and you have failed utterly and completely as never Party failed before. I read your Bill with increasing wonder and amazement every day, for I see in it a volume—aye, Sir, and a large and capacious volume—of recantations, contradictions, broken pledges, and former falsified predictions on the part of the Minister and his colleagues, in the light of which you stand before us and before the country as a Government utterly discredited already in dealing with this question. (Cheers.) What room, then, have we for more confidence, what hope of better or happier results in your proposals of to-day? I reluctantly confess that I have none; reluctantly, because I desire from my heart to see Ireland again tranquil, contented, and at rest, but peace and happiness, prosperity and contentment can never be attained by revolutionary schemes like these, which appeal to the avarice, the cupidity, and the worst passions of the human race in any country or in any nation on the earth. Especially do I believe that this is true of Ireland and the Irish people. Ireland, I grant you, has suffered much, and often, at the hands of England. She has suffered even more perhaps, at times, at the hands of those whom she believed to be her friends; but the worst and the most cruel blow that has ever been inflicted on her will be this—when, by the acceptance of this Bill, you teach the lawless and the disaffected, to the terror and dismay of the peaceful and well-affected subjects of the Queen, that by outrages, by violence and crime, by persistent and daring defiance of the law, they can wring—nay more, they have wrung—from the Imperial Parliament the grossest and the most unhallowed Act of great public confiscation that ever yet has been attempted by any minister or statesman in any civilized society or country in the world. (Loud cheering.)

"The Irony of Events"

ON

MR GLADSTONE

IN OFFICE.

AN ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT HON.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON, M.P.,

IN GLASGOW, 7th DECEMBER 1881.

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ADDRESS BY LORD GEORGE HAMILTON, M.P.

Lord George Hamilton, who was received with loud and long-continued cheers, said—

Mr Chairman, My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—When I look upon this vast and crowded hall, and when I note the enthusiasm that characterises all who are here present, I can scarcely believe that this great gathering represents that political party who were so overthrown at the last general election. (Cheers.) Seldom, if ever, in our political history has there been so spontaneous a revival of hope and of confidence as that which now exists in every rank of the Conservative party, and in every quarter of the United Kingdom. (Cheers.) And our opponents seem almost conscious of this fact, for I see that their leaders, the present Cabinet Council, instead of remaining in London to attend to their official duties, are in various parts of the country scolding the late Government, in the hope that they may thus cover their own discomfiture. (Laughter and cheers.) The Prime Minister exclaims—"The house is on fire—(laughter)—help me, men of all creeds and all politics, to put the fire out; but do not, I implore you, ask who set it alight." (Laughter.)

With your permission, I intend to ask you that question here to-night. The Conservative party have given, and will continue to give their assistance to the Government in their struggle with anarchy and outrage in Ireland—(hear, hear)—and if it is with regret that we have to assent to stringent coercive legislation, that regret is doubled by the knowledge that if our advice had been taken last year it would not now have been necessary. But the crisis is too grave to permit us to have one moment's hesitation in following the road down which honour and duty both beckon us to go.

It is difficult to exaggerate the deplorable condition of Ireland at the present moment. I doubt if ever in her past melancholy history there has been a greater combination of public danger. For the first time in the history of this century, outrage and sedition have been so allowed to spread and root themselves that they successfully defy the most stringent coercion. (Hear, hear.) But that is not all. At the very moment that this great struggle between order and outrage is taking place, these very schemes of public plunder for the propagation of which Mr Parnell and his associates are now in jail, are being legally executed by the officials of the Minister who imprisoned them. The three leading Ministers of the day—the Prime Minister, Lord Hartington—(a cheer and hisses)—and Mr Chamberlain, have each and all their peculiar aversion in political life. Mr Gladstone—(cheers and

hisses)—denounces confiscation as a scheme of public plunder. Lord Hartington characterises as miscreants those who promote their objects by outrage and violence, and Mr Chamberlain loathes, as a blot upon civilisation, coercion. Yet it is a melancholy fact that the combination of these three distinguished men for the better government of Ireland for 18 months has so completely obliterated all those moral motives usually existing in a civilised community that the only forces now observable in Ireland are outrage, coercion, and confiscation. (Cheers.) Union is supposed to be strength, but in this instance each one of these distinguished men has been compelled to do that which he dislikes, without in any promoting the common object which all three had in view. (Cheers.) We have all read legends in which we were told how, when wealth and property had been acquired by evil deeds, the curse of these deeds had become so associated with the property that those who afterwards inherited it had the enjoyment and power which is otherwise associated with wealth and position marred and nullified by that curse. And so it would seem that a similar curse is associated with the present Government, and with the evil deeds and calumnies with which they hunted Lord Beaconsfield from office are hung as a millstone round their neck, to frustrate the efficacy of their action and to stultify their councils. They came into office with a huge confiding majority. There was vigour enough in the leaders, there was power enough in the following, to enable them without illegitimate aid to have carried any measures that they might have thought necessary. But no; that old fatal trick of utilising Irish disaffection for party purposes was so engrained in their system of politics that they could not abstain from it even in these advantageous circumstances. (Cheers.) They deliberately allowed a seditious and criminal combination to overrun the whole of Ireland in the belief that these might help them to pass a Land Bill against the Conservatives, and then at their bidding would for ever disappear. I would ask you to note the fact that it is not the first time that a similar coalition has placed the Liberal party in power, and the country in danger. (Cheers.) But, gentlemen, out of the deplorable state of things now existing in Ireland there are still some gleams of hope, and I cannot refrain upon the present occasion, as I believe there are here present many members of the Orange Brotherhood—(cheers)—I cannot refrain from expressing our gratitude to them for the noble service which they have performed on behalf of law and order in Ireland. (Cheers.) These various life and property defence associations have been started, and the agents through which these associations have been able to effect their purpose have almost in every instance been Orangemen. (Cheers.) And to such an extent is their loyalty in this respect recognised that many honest and law-abiding Roman Catholics have asked, and not in vain, for their assistance. And, therefore, I hope that the union which

in times of difficulty and of danger has thus been effected between different sects of Her Majesty's subjects, but still professing the same creed of obedience to the law, may, if Ireland hereafter ever enjoys days of prosperity and happiness, bear beneficent fruit. (Cheers.)

Now, gentlemen, such being the condition of affairs, I am amused at the impudence of a charge which was made the other day against the Conservative party by the first law-adviser of the Government. Sir Henry James was good enough to inform an audience in grandiloquent language that he was no gutter-child of politics to throw dirt at his opponents. And the words were hardly out of his mouth before he took up a large handful of the nastiest mud which he threw indiscriminately at his opponents—(laughter)—for he deliberately accused the whole Conservative party of want of faith, and of a total want of political honour. I was a little annoyed at the moment on reading these words. But we must make allowance for Sir Henry James. He had to perform at the same time a two-fold, but a very incongruous task. He had to prosecute a man called Lefroy for murder, and he had at a political assembly to defend his own Government against a charge robbery. (Great laughter and cheers.) And, therefore, we must, as considerate politicians, make allowance for him. In these perplexing circumstances his ideas and words became a little mixed—(laughter)—and, no doubt by accident, a good deal of the strong language which he had intended to devote to the prosecution of Lefroy—(laughter)—found its way into the defence of his own Government. (Renewed laughter and cheers.) Now, the charge which he makes against us is a very serious charge. He says that the Conservative party are deliberately seeking an alliance with disaffected Irishmen for the purpose of turning him and his colleagues out of office. Now, gentlemen, I am glad before so representative a gathering to take an opportunity of saying that the charge that we or any section of the Conservative party are seeking an alliance with seditious Irishmen is as false as it is true that before the last general election the Parnellite vote throughout the three kingdoms was systematically and successfully sought for by the leaders of the Liberal party. (Loud cheers.) Ah! gentlemen, you know something of these tactics in the great town of Glasgow. (Hear, hear, and cheers, and a Voice "City.") I apologise; I am so accustomed to speak in towns that I forgot Glasgow was a city. (Laughter.) What was the object for which Mr Chamberlain established his caucus but to enlist, if possible, Irishmen as an auxiliary force of that caucus? At present the Liberal members for Manchester, for Salford, for Newcastle, and a whole number of other large towns in the North of England, obtained their seats from the solid votes given by the Home Rulers in the towns which they represent. (Hear, hear.)

But there was one town in the North of England in which more systematic efforts were made than any other to catch the

Home Rule vote, and that town was the great port of Liverpool —(hear, hear, and cheers)—and for two reasons. The Home Rule vote was there stronger than elsewhere, and the Conservatives were in possession of the majority of the representation of that town. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) The Home-Rulers at the municipal elections of 1879 had helped the Liberals to win a number of seats. When, therefore, a vacancy suddenly occurred in the representation of that town, great care was taken in selecting that candidate who was most likely to win the seat, and the gentlenan who was selected for that purpose was no ordinary man. He vas Lord Ramsay, the present Lord Dalhousie, a member of Her Majesty's Administration. He took with him letters, or at last he received them whilst he was contesting that city, both from Mr Gladstone and Lord Hartington and other members of the Liberal party. He swallowed Home Rule. (Laughter and cheers.) As I know the tendency of our opponents to have short memories concerning their political backslidings, I took the opportunity when that election was going on to have sent to me a certain number of placards which were published during that election, and I have two of them in my hand now. They are very instructive. One is, "Liverpool Home Rule Association. Ramsay for ever." (Laughter.) "To the Irishmen of Liverpool. Fellow countrymen—Lord Ramsay having now declared his willingness to vote for an inquiry into Ireland's demand for a native Parliament, we ask you, in the name of our country and our country's cause to give him your hearty support at the coming election. Signed, by order of the Central Council, A. Cummings, president of the Liverpool Home Rule Association." (Laughter.) But, gentlemen, that is not all. Dr. Cummings, who is a most influential member of the Land League, and a consistent supporter of Mr Parnell, both in the House of Commons and out of the House of Commons, made a speech to Mr Parnell's supporters in Liverpool giving the grounds upon which they should support Lord Ramsay. That speech will be found in all the Liverpool papers published on the 30th January, 1880, and he said this—"Liberals have given us the assistance we desire. They have promised us the assistance that we want elsewhere, and we do expect to get a good deal at the hands of the Liberal party, now that they have joined us and sought our assistance." (Laughter and cheers.) But, now, gentlemen, comes the serious part of the business, for now we get at the terms of the compact, "What the Irish people wanted was a Parliament which would represent the whole people of Ireland, and by such a Parliament he meant a Parliament of which five-sixths of its members were Catholic. They wanted a Parliament that would be above English influence, and would be able to protect the interests of Ireland, even if need be, against the Parliament of England. Now, the tactics of Lord Ramsay were not altogether approved of by certain old-fashioned Liberals in Liverpool, and therefore it was necessary that some person of unquestionable

authority from the Liberal headquarters should come down and aid and abet him by his countenance and by his speech. A gentleman was found willing and ready to undertake that task, and who do you think that individual was?—it was our old friend Sir William Vernon Harcourt—(laughter, hisses, and cheers)—that very same gentleman who, standing in identically the same place as I do, announced to an enthusiastic Liberal audience—(a Voice, "Question")—his determination to oppose, even by force, as Home Secretary, that separation between England and Ireland in connection with which, only eighteen months ago, he, as Sir William Vernon Harcourt, supported Lord Ramsay in nibbling at. (Cheers.)

At last general election you all recollect that wise letter which Lord Beaconsfield wrote to the Duke of Marlborough, clearly indicating the nature of the difficulties which were likely to arise in Ireland. You recollect the ridicule with which that letter was treated by the Liberal party. They all laughed at it then, but which of them will laugh at it now? (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Yet, be it remembered that in consequence of writing that letter a circular was sent by the Central Home-Rule Association of Great Britain ordering every single Irish voter in the three kingdoms to vote against Lord Beaconsfield and his supporters as they would against the enemies of their race. But that was not the only warning which the Liberal party and the present Prime Minister received. Earl Grey, a distinguished Liberal, wrote to Mr Gladstone, and pointed out to him the inevitable consequences of the agitation which he was then pursuing in Mid-Lothian, and Mr Gladstone courteously replied by insinuating that Earl Grey was an old woman. (Laughter and cheers.) Now, it is the recollection of these warnings which naturally annoy us when we look at the present distracted condition of Ireland, and if we want any place in which we can properly express our righteous indignation, where could that be done with greater propriety than in Scotland—(hear, hear,)—for was it not in Mid-Lothian that the matches were struck which have lighted a flame from the Transvaal to Ireland? (Cheers.) If my memory serves me right, it was in this very hall that Mr Gladstone laid his last faggot for the roasting of the late Administration. (Cheers.) He surpassed here all his previous extravagances by denouncing in the most violent terms a harmless Arms Bill which Lord Lytton had passed in India, and pointed out that this deprived the natives of those rifles with which they were accustomed to defend themselves against snakes—(laughter)—whilst he maintained that the restriction which that bill put upon the use of dynamite was an unwarrantable interference with that useful and harmless toy. (Laughter and cheers.) Well, great is the irony of events. (Hear, hear.) Within eighteen months that very same man has had to pass a bill of tenfold greater severity, to apply it to an integral part of the self-governing portion of the Empire, and so far from

dynamite being that harmless compound which he depicted, I am informed that his own Home Secretary could not address a Liberal audience in this very hall without squads of detectives and policemen down below. (Laughter.) What were they there for? They were there to prevent an explosion of this harmless compound —(laughter)—which might have sent the Home Secretary and all his admirers nearer heaven than they would care to go. (Laughter.)

I observed the other day that a very able new recruit in the ranks of the Government had rushed to their rescue, and that Lord Rosebery at Greenock and elsewhere—(cheers and hisses)—had been making speeches on behalf of his party, and he was ingenious enough to invent a very plausible theory for the unquestionable bitterness which now exists in political life. He very much regretted that bitterness, but he accounted for it in the following way. He said Lord Beaconsfield, when he was in office, found out that he could not legislate in domestic matters because his legislation to be useful must be Liberal, and that therefore he had deliberately departed from the ancient and traditional foreign policy of the country in order to form a destinctive policy of his own. Now, will you allow me for a moment or two to deal with this ingenious theory? (Cheers.) The late Government's legislation during its earlier years of office, and before obstruction had attained the perfection of an art, I believe will challange comparison with the legislation of any previous Government. (Cheers.) But I will quote one—and one perfectly impartial authority concerning that legislation. Mr Chamberlain five years ago saw enough to observe in Birmingham that the Artisans' Dwellings Act—the Act of a Conservative Administration—had done more good for his native town of Birmingham than all the preceding Parliaments of the past 25 years. (Cheers.) During the later part of the late Administration it was not possible to pass any measure of any importance, owing to the barricades of Parliamentary obstruction—which barricades, although they were made up of Irishmen, were planned and plotted by gentlemen, some of whom now occupy prominent positions in the Government. There were three measures that year by year we used to bring forward. There was a measure for the amendment of the bankruptcy laws, and measures for the improvement of the criminal code and for the prevention of floods. I recollect Mr Bright characterising all these measures as imbecile legislation. (Laughter.) I am consoled that by finding that so important have they become when provided by Liberal Governments, that in order to pass the Bankruptcy Bill and the Floods Prevention Bill it was proposed to take away from the House of Commons that traditional right of discussion which from the first it has enjoyed. (Cheers.) But, gentlemen, let us go back a little. Who passed the Reform Bill of 1867, and placed the franchise upon a durable and intelligible basis, but Lord Beaconsfield? (Cheers.) Who passed all the

Factory Acts, which have done more to improve the moral status and physique of our industrial population than any number of other measures? (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I entered political life as a young man, but I gloried in being a follower of Lord Beaconsfield —(cheers)—because he seemed to me in domestic legislation to maintain the exact medium between inaction and revolution, and educated the Conservative party into that system of domestic legislation which enabled us to be liberal without ceasing to be conservative. (Cheers.) It is quite true, gentlemen, that he never approved of that legislation by which one class was to be benefited by robbing another. (Cheers.) He did not believe that the condition of Ireland could be improved by coqueting with rebels in opposition in order to imprison them while in office. (Laughter.) He did not believe that to improve the depression in trade and agriculture it was necessary to put master and man, landlord and tenant, in the position of two Kilkenny cats. (Laughter.) He held that our institutions, although requiring periodical enlargement and reform, had some nobler purpose to serve than by their destruction to reunite the Liberal party. (Laughter.) To bring all classes into closer connection, to infuse into all ranks a just pride in the past and confidence in the future, to instil into men patriotism and self-sacrifice in order that they may more adequately perform their duties as a self-governing people at home and a great governing nation abroad—(cheers)—these were the objects to which Lord Beaconsfield not unsuccessfully devoted his life. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, so much for one-half of Lord Rosebery's contention.

Let me now go to the other half. Last year I ventured at Edinburgh to give a challenge to the whole Liberal party, and my challenge has not since been accepted. I challenged them to show that the action of Lord Beaconsfield in reference to the Eastern question in any way departed from the traditions or action of preceding Liberal Governments. (Cheers.) Lord Beaconsfield was a great judge of human character—(cheers)—but he made one great mistake. He thought that if he carried on the foreign policy of this country on the lines on which all preceding Governments had done he might as confidenly rely upon the support of his great antagonist, as Mr Gladstone would have done if the postions had been reversed. But he was treated just as he was concerning the Irish Church. Mr Gladstone threw all his previous promises and acts to the four winds, and devoted his energy to overthrow the policy which he had cemented with so much blood and treasure during the Crimean war. (Cheers.) And now, gentlemen, by one of those historic fictions which the Liberal party have always indulged in, they attempt to say that it was Lord Beaconsfield who departed from and Mr Gladstone who adhered to the ancient national traditional foreign policy.

I was only the other day reading accounts of what took place in this country some seventy years back, at the time when we

were involved in the terrible war with the first Emperor Napoleon, and I find then that the Whigs invented the same historical fiction in order to cover their factious and unpatriotic conduct. They then pretended that Napoleon Bonaparte was indentified with the liberties of Europe; they then pretended that Mr Pitt and his successors, because they were Tories, and because they were opposed to Napoleon Bonaparte, represented despotism and intolerance; and to such an incredible extent did the Liberal party of that day impede and harass the Ministers who were entrusted with the terrible duty of fighting for the liberties of Europe that one of the most prominent of the Liberals of the day, Dr. Parr, said—"I should not think I have done my duty if I went to bed any night without praying for the success of Napoleon Bonaparte." And Mr Fox, who was then leader of the Liberal party, and who stood to Mr Pitt in very much the same relation as Mr Gladstone to Lord Beaconsfield, writing to his intimate friend Earl Grey, said — "I am gone somewhat further in hate of the English Government than you and the rest of my friends, and certainly further than can with prudence be avowed. The triumph of the French Government over the English does, in fact, afford me a degree of pleasure which it is very difficult to disguise." Another favourite method of impeding the Government was to disparage the military genius of Wellington. And to such an extent was Napoleon assisted by these unpatriotic manœuvres in the House of Commons that he actually made his chief official paper, for a number of years in Paris, devote no less than one-third of its contents to reporting the speeches made by Liberals in the House of Commons against their own country. Just the same language was used concerning Pitt and Napoleon as has recently been used concerning Lord Beaconsfield and the Russian Government. They put Napoleon on the same pedestal of liberty to which they elevated the Russian Government, and they heaped the same contumely and the same obloquy upon Mr Pitt and his successors which they recently piled upon Lord Beaconsfield. But it was reserved, not for an English Tory writer, but for a great French Republican historian, Monsieur Lanfrey, to tear the mask from off the faces of those false Liberals; and he and other writers have shown conclusively that a more intolerable despot and ruffian than the First Napoleon never exercised military sway. And I was reading only the other day a pamphlet written by a distinguished member of the Reform Club, and the passage expresses so clearly and so well what was done sixty years back that I hope you will excuse me if I read it to you at length. "The Whigs were wont to talk of the rights of national independence, of popular liberties of free discussion, and they saw Napoleon trampling upon every one of them, annexing and partitioning kingdoms and republics, suppressing legislatures and municipalities, extinguishing the freedom of printing, of meeting even of private speech, insulting the few who dared to show some signs of

unconquered spirit, forcing his military yoke on the necks of Frenchmen, Germans, Italians and Spaniards alike, openly plundering and giving to adventurers who followed him a license to plunder. Long after his fall it was the trick of Whig writers to speak of this restless barbarian as the greatest of civil rulers and legislators." And why did they do this? Simply because by the accident of office, the men who had to suppress this restless barbarian were opposed to them in political life. (Cheers.)

Last year, in the House of Commons, a very extraordinary incident occured. It was proposed that the remains of that poor young Prince Imperial, who met his death in Zululand, should receive a place in Westminster Abbey. It was supposed that inasmuch as that young man was most friendly in spirit towards the people of those islands—that inasmuch as he associated with the friends of Englishmen, that his education had been English, and that he was as much an Englishman in feeling as a Frenchman—it was supposed that his poor mangled remains might have been allowed peacefully there to repose as a token that the foolish hereditary hate which existed between Englishmen and Frenchmen was for ever buried. But no; the Radical party would not allow it. And what was the ground upon which they opposed it? Uprose from those Liberal benches, which sixty years back poured forth unlimited eulogy on the First Napoleon—uprose Radical after Radical—and said that they would not allow Westminster Abbey to be desecrated by the body of one who had in his veins the blood of the vampire of the liberties of Europe. And so, gentlemen, when fifty years hence the true story of the Russo-Turkish War is written—when party calumny has no object to gain by misrepresentation—then I believe posterity will have more than a good word to give to that old patriot who, in failing health, with enemies in front of him and enemies behind him, successfully asserted your right to make your voice heard and obeyed when your interests were at stake. (Hear, hear, and loud cheers.)

Now, gentlemen, that the Liberal party have got into office, none of them seem to know what their foreign policy is. Mr Chamberlain, speaking to the Union of Liberal Associations, said—"We may be right or we may be wrong, but at anyrate we have done what we said we would do. (Laughter.) We said that we would reverse the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield, and we have reversed it." (Laughter.) Sir Henry James, speaking a few days afterwards, and making a speech which was admitted by all Liberals to be a most successful exposition of the views of the present Government, says:—"The time has not yet come to answer the criticisms of our political opponents. Our foreign policy is to a great extent theirs, and not our own." (Laughter and loud cheers.) I must give my friend Sir William Vernon Harcourt—(hisses and cheers)—the merit of being very adroit when he came to the foreign policy of the Government. He

said—"I would describe the policy of the Government: it is summed up in four words—'Righteousness exalteth a nation.'" (Laughter.) Ah! gentlemen, I fail to trace the connection between that text and any act of Her Majesty's Government in their foreign policy—(hear, hear)—but it is very closely connected with a domestic incident. For the past two years a Professor of Republicanism and Atheism has has been endeavouring, contrary to the law of the land and the forms of the House of Commons, to force his entrance into that House—(hear, hear, and cheers)—and at the commencement of the next session he will again make an attempt to take the oath of allegiance to that Sovereign and her family, whom he has persistently libelled, by calling on the name of that Supreme Being against whom he has with equal persistence blasphemed. (Hear, hear.) Will the Government aid and abet him in that profanation? By that single act we shall be able to judge how well merited Sir William Harcourt's contention is that the acts of himself and his colleagues are so righteous that they exalt the nation. (Laughter and cheers.)

I do not know if any of you have ever taken the trouble to investigate for yourselves the reason why we have so deep an interest in this so-called Eastern question, because the very moment that you do so you will see that the policy of Mr Gladstone in opposition, by which he maintained that through the concerted action of Europe the interests of this country could be adequately protected, is an utter delusion. Why have we an interest in this so-called Eastern Question? It is not because we are a European Power, but because we are an Asiatic Power. (Laughter and cheers.) It is not because we live in a little island in the West, but because we hold the continent of India in the East. (Cheers.) The dominions of the Sultan of Turkey lie partly in Europe and partly in Asia. So long as Russia confines her attempts at agression to European Turkey it is possible that the other European Powers who have an interest in preventng her taking Constantinople may interfere. They did interfere at the time of the Crimean War. They did not interfere during the time of the last war, and it was by our action, and by our action alone, that Russia was pushed out of Constantinople. (Cheers.) But we are, with the exception of Russia, the only European Power which has large dominions in Asia. Our interests and the interests of Russia are diametrically opposed. We wish to promote good government in Turkey, and we wish to see the principles of civil and religious liberty and of free trade extended through these dominions. Russia, on the other hand, propagates principles of exactly the contrary nature, and her object is to discredit the Turkish administration and to prevent reform, in the hope that, when the collapse takes place, she may be able to get a large share of the spoil. (Hear, hear.) When Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury went to the Berlin Congress they found they could not rely upon the concerted action of Europe to stop

Russia in Asia, and they therefore had to make up their minds whether Russia should be allowed to absorb Asia Minor, Persia, and Central Asia, and whether such an absorption of territory would be dangerous to our Indian Empire, and they came to the conclusion that it would be dangerous, and they therefore negotiated, for the purpose of preventing that absorption of territory, the Anglo-Turkish Convention; and they acquired Cyprus in order to give effect to this Convention. Now, the conduct of Mr Gladstone in reference to these two transactions has been most characteristic. He found out that there was a deep-rooted jealousy and dislike of Russia amongst even the most Radical of his supporters, and that if he were openly to countenance and abet Russian agression his party would not remain in office. What has been done? To damage Lord Beaconsfield's reputation he denounced the acquisition of Cyprus as the act of a pickpocket, and he characterised the Anglo-Turkish Convention as an insane Convention; and yet, to keep his party in office, he becomes the receiver of stolen goods and the exponent of a policy of insanity. (Laughter and loud cheers.) But I regret to say the action of the Government in reference to Afghanistan has been much the same. They conciliated one section of their supporters when they announced their intention of resisting the extension of Russian influence; and to please another section they deliberately took steps by which that influence must be extended, and all effective interference rendered impossible. (Cheers.) And so, when you look down the whole line of policy of the present Government, you will find the same discrepancy between words and deeds, between promises and performances. (Cheers.)

The one object to which the Prime Minister devoted his marvellous ability during the past few years has been to effect the reunion of the Liberal party. To attain that object he departed from all the traditions and all the reserve which had hitherto characterised the statesmen of this country. (Cheers.) To attain that object he jeopardised the peace of Europe, tranquillity in Ireland, in the Transvaal, and in India. And now that he has attained that union of the Liberal party, nothing will induce him to do anything that will break up that Liberal party; and so, gentlemen, whatever difficulty will arise in the future, that difficulty will be dealt with not according to the emergency of the moment, but according to the cohesive power of the Liberal party—(cheers). Although the Liberal party never was more victorious in Parliament, I doubt whether its cohesion was ever less certain, or we as a nation ever had to face greater or more perplexing national dangers. That is the juncture of public affairs that appals us all: Moreover, inasmuch as the composition and constitution of the Liberal party forces them to have recourse to tergiversation and postponement of questions, they are headed by a man of vast ability, and whose superhuman power of debate and speech are, I regret to say, accompanied by almost equally superhuman powers of self-

deception. (Cheers.) I have heard the present prime Minister make speeches characterised by a power and versatility and an eloquence which might make the most renowned of the ancient orators envious; but when you sat down and you reflected upon the purport of that speech, what did you find? You found that the object of the speech was not to endorse or to adhere to what he had previously said, but to explain it away. (Laughter and cheers.) I say it with regret, but I say it deliberately, you cannot place reliance on the declarations of the present Government.

Twice within eighteen months they solemnly promised, in the most official declaration that could be made, and through the mouth of the Sovereign in the Queen's Speech, that they would do something, and in both cases have they departed from their word. After a solemn promise made last year when Parliament was prorogued, that they would in no sense whatever forego their first and their primary duty of suppressing anarchy in Ireland and maintaining law and authority, they have not done so. (Hear, hear.) And why? Mr Chamberlain has told us why. Because, in his opinion—and he represents the dominant faction in the Cabinet—the maintenance of order and the supremacy of the law must be made dependent upon the policy of the Government. (Cheers.) Ah! gentlemen, it is not merely in reference to Ireland. Look at what occurred in the Transvaal. Parliament was solemnly informed that it was essential that the Queen's authority should be vindicated. A thousand lives were sacrificed in the vain attempt to vindicate that authority, and then, because Mr Bright declined to allow the Government to make use of the reinforcements sent out for the purpose of vindicating that authority, Mr Gladstone invented the monstrous doctrine that he would be guilty of bloodguiltiness if he brought to a successful issue the contest in which he had deliberately embarked. (Cheers.)

I can recollect well when the Land Act of 1870 was brought in, Mr Gladstone informed us it was a final measure, and he destroyed with consummate skill and power certain principles which were then advocated by Irishmen; but in 1881 these very doctrines and these very principles, which he himself had demolished in 1870, cropped up in his own bill as the cardinal features of a preliminary scheme of confiscation. (Cheers.) He told us in introducing the bill that the landlords after a severe trial had been acquitted, that they treated generally their tenants fairly, and the result of his bill would not be to reduce rents throughout Ireland; and this declaration if followed by the action of his own commissioners making a reduction varying from 25 to 50 per cent. on the incomes that landlords have previously had. (Cheers.) When, at the commencement of the late Parliament, we called his attention to the atrocious practice of boycotting, it was not then convenient for him to move, so, out of his infinite versatility, he argued that boycotting, after all, was not illegal. It was merely a question of exclusive dealing. (Laughter and cheers.) But

only a few months ago he announced, amidst the vociferous cheers of the guests at the Lord Mayor's dinner, that the mildest significance of the term boycotting is the total ruin of the livelihood of the man against whom its machinery is directed. (Cheers.)

I understand that our political opponents are much pleased with an election which took place yesterday in Londonderry, in which Mr Gladstone's Irish Solicitor-General was returned to Parliament. The only method by which he achieved his return was very simple. He used the Prime Minister's name freely on his cards and freely in his speeches, and he practically said to the constituency, which is purely an agricultural one, "If you want your rents reduced all round five-and-twenty per cent., then you must vote for me." (Hear, hear.)

At the present moment there are two sets of men who are undergoing imprisonment—one in Ireland and one in England. Those in Ireland are Mr Parnell and his associates, and they have been imprisoned at the instance of the Government because they have advised and pressed tenants in Ireland not to pay the rents which they had contracted to do. Another body of men were last week imprisoned at the instance of the Government, and their crime was that they had been guilty of bribery at last general election. But when one man combines both offences—when that man is a member of an immaculate Administration—when the objects for which he commits these offences are the attainment of office and emoluments and ultimately a judgeship, then this combination of offences is termed a triumph of Liberal principles. (Laughter and cheers.)

Now, I must apologise for detaining you at such great length. (Loud cries of "No," and "Go on.") I have little more to say. I thank you most heartily for the patience and kindness with which you have listened to my speech, and for the warmth of your reception. But I confess that that which makes me sad in speaking to any great Scotch political meeting is to know that if the past policy of the present Prime Minister has brought danger and disorder upon this country, it is mainly through the political action of Scotland that he has been able to do so much harm. (Cheers.) You are all proud of your nationality, and there are certain traditions and certain characteristics that will be for ever associated with the Scotch name. The tendencies of the Prime Minister's policy are clear, and when you contrast them with these qualities which are specially associated with Scotchmen, you find them clash in every particular. (Cheers.) There is no country which has suffered more or has done more to promote the truths of the Reformation than Scotland—(cheers)—yet it was by Scotland's members that Mr Gladstone was able to overthrow the upas-tree of Protestantism in Ireland. (Cheers.) Scotland has the overwhelming merit of having produced the first political economist —Adam Smith—(cheers)—who combined sound theory with practical knowledge, and his teaching has been of infinite benefit,

not only to Scotland, but the whole human race. Yet, again, it was Scotland's representatives who enabled Mr Gladstone to depose from the pedestal upon which they previously stood Adam Smith's doctrines, in order to substitute for them the wild dicta of the sub-commissioners of his Irish Land Court. (Cheers.) We are all proud of our magnificent chain of loyal colonies extending all over the world, and we rejoice that in every one of these colonies slavery is no longer recognised. (Cheers.) In that holy work Scotland's sons have ever been foremost but it was again through the action or through the support of Scotland's representatives that the present Government were enabled to betray the loyal colonists whom have they called to their aid, in order that they might add to our most gracious Majesty's titles that of Suzerain of a slave-holding community. (Cheers.) On behalf of civil and religious liberty this country has suffered as much as any country in Europe; and yet again it is through the support of Scotch members that Mr Gladstone has been able to promote the objects of Russia—the stronghold of despotism and religious intolerance. And if there be two qualities which above all others are pre-eminently Scottish, it is a love of truth and a love of your own country; yet again Scotland supports a policy based on duplicity and tergiversation, and prompted by a man whose most potent election cry was ridicule of patriotism. (Cheers.) Now these are the questions which I want not simply you, but I want moderate reflecting Scotchmen to carefully consider. The events of the past 18 months have excited in the minds even of the most bigoted Radical acolytes doubts as to the infallibility of their Pope—qualms as to the integrity and patriotism of his conduct. (Cheers.) Let it then be your duty, as the citizens of the first city in Scotland, to convert those doubts into convictions, and to show that the principles and the creed which you profess are in thorough accord with the progress, the aspirations, and the conscience of a prosperous and patriotic people. (Lord George Hamilton sat down amidst loud and continued cheering.)

SPEECH

DELIVERED BY MR. J. D. MAYNE, IN THE MUSIC HALL, BARNSTAPLE,

On the 9th of October, 1882

In moving the resolution, "That this meeting desires to record its unabated confidence in the Conservative Leaders, and in the principles which they have supported in office and in Opposition," Mr. Mayne said: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—Although I am a stranger to everyone whom I see before me in this hall, yet I do feel a considerable amount of confidence in addressing you, when I remember that at the last General Election, when the great wreck and ruin fell on the Conservative party, you here, electors of Barnstaple, faithful amongst the faithless found, stood fast by your colours, and returned to the head of the poll the true and sound Conservative who sits at my right. I cannot say that I was astonished at the result of the last General Election, because the constitution of England is rapidly changing to a democracy, and democracies are proverbially fickle, because they are generally misinformed. And for two years before the last General Election a gigantic and persistent effort had been made to mislead and to prejudice the minds of the English people upon all political subjects: for two years before the last General Election the leaders of the Liberal Party had been persistently puffing themselves and their nostrums, in a manner which would be considered indelicate by the proprietors of the Apollinaris Water or of Cockle's Pills—for two years they had been calumniating the character and conduct, the action and the motives, of their opponents, in a manner that would be considered disreputable by any tradesman if he were referring to the conduct of his own rival, however justly that rival might be suspected of putting sand in his sugar or strychnine in his beer. Gentlemen, Barnstaple does not lie on the road to Midlothian, and therefore you never had the opportunity of hear-

ing Mr. Gladstone denouncing Lord Beaconsfield at the top of his voice, even from the windows of a first-class compartment, but no doubt, echoes of the Midlothian thunders reached your ears, and you remember what the nature of Mr. Gladstone's orations was. You remember you were informed that the Conservatives were wasteful and extravagant in their finance, that they were insolent and aggressive in their foreign policy, that they were indolent and careless in home legislation; and you were told that, if you would only return a Liberal Government, a new millennium would set in, economy would be practised, taxation would be reduced, legislation would be applied to every department of the State, war and interference with foreign Powers would cease for ever, and the air would be full of celestial voices sounding forth, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men." Well, now, gentlemen, has the millennium commenced? has your taxation diminished? do you see legislation extended into every department of the State? what do you think of the state of peace in Ireland? what do you think of the war in Egypt? It seems to me that just at present we hear much more of the military trumpet than of the angelic harp. Now, gentlemen, I wish, with your permission, to touch briefly upon each of the broad general topics to which I have referred; and, first, I shall speak upon the question of finance. Finance is a very dull subject, and figures are matters difficult to make intelligible to a popular audience; and, therefore, I shall refer to them in the most general terms. Now, you are doubtless aware that the six years of Conservative Administration was a period of the greatest distress and of the greatest depression; we had famines, we had bad harvests, we had depression in commerce, we had wars and rumours of wars abroad, we had bankruptcy of the foreign nations to whom we had lent hundreds of millions of our money, but the broad general result of Conservative finance was this: Sir Stafford Northcote abolished the whole of the Sugar Duties, he never allowed the Income Tax to rise above 5d. in the £, and he diminished the incidence of that Income Tax, so that persons whose incomes were between £100 and £150 a-year paid nothing to the tax, and persons with incomes between £300 and £400 a-year received deductions which they had not formerly received. The broad general result, therefore, was that no workingman pays Income Tax, and that the struggling class immediately above them pays that tax with benefits and deductions such as they had never obtained from the Liberal Government. The people of England were more lightly taxed under the Conservative Administration than they had ever been during the two previous generations. Now, gentlemen, let us turn to the "Liberal" Administration. The very first act which Mr. Gladstone did as Chancellor of the Exchequer was to put on an extra penny on the Income Tax, by raising it in 1880 from 5d. to 6d. No doubt he did this because he was going to reduce the duty upon French

wines, in order that he might negotiate a treaty of commerce with France. He never did, however, negotiate the treaty of commerce, and he never did reduce the duty on French wines ; but, notwithstanding, he kept on the extra penny of Income Tax in order that he might secure to himself that proud position of Liberal Chancellors of the Exchequer, "a surplus at his next Budget." Well, gentlemen, he did obtain his surplus at the Budget, and, accordingly, with much pomp and circumstance, he took off his penny, but he put an additional taxation on spirits and upon probate duty, producing an amount of £650,000 a-year. That was his second year's finance. Now, in his third year, this took place: that, at the first rumour of an Egyptian war, he put on an extra 1½d. Income Tax—that is 3d. upon the last half of the present year. The result, therefore, of Liberal Administration is this: that in each year of Mr. Gladstone's Administration, you have been taxed more heavily than you ever were by the Conservative Government. Now, gentlemen, let me come to the side of expenditure. We were told we were so wasteful and so extravagant! Now, in the end of July, Sir Stafford Northcote made a speech in which he contrasted the expenditure of the year 1879—which was the most expensive year of the Conservative Government—with the expenditure of the year that has just elapsed, and the estimates of the year which has just commenced, and the result was this—that the ordinary expenditure of the last year was one million higher than the ordinary expenditure of the year 1879, and that we are promised an expenditure in the coming year of three millions higher than that most expensive of all the Conservative years. And, mind you, this statement does not take in any unusual or unforeseen war expenses. It is simply a comparison between the ordinary every-day expenses of administration, which there is no reason to suppose will ever be reduced. This, gentlemen, is the parsimony and economy of the Liberal Government. This statement was made by Sir Stafford Northcote, not upon a platform, not behind the backs of his opponents, but in his place in the House of Commons in the presence of Mr. Gladstone. And what did Mr. Gladstone answer to it? Why, he admitted every part of the assertion, and all he could say was, that really he could not see that the Conservatives had been wasteful or extravagant at all, that he could not claim credit for Liberal administration, and that he could only say that it required a younger man than himself to be more economical than he had been. Gentlemen, think of the shouts of derision that would have risen in a Liberal assembly if Sir Stafford Northcote had made an excuse of that sort for himself; but the peculiarity of Liberalism is that everything is pardoned to the "grand old man," and when he gets into office by making one set of pledges, he is allowed to keep his office after he has broken every one of them. Gentlemen, I won't say that Mr. Gladstone could in matters of finance have done differently from what he has done, but

what I do say is, that for a man to hound his opponents out of office by making accusations which he has to withdraw when he gets into office himself, is obtaining Government by false pretences. Now, gentlemen, I come to the second point, that of "abundant legislation." While Mr. Gladstone was out of office, he did not speak very much in his place in Parliament, but he made up for it by writing in the most prolific manner—sometimes on post-cards—sometimes in newspapers, and sometimes in magazines. Amongst other things, he wrote an article in the "Nineteenth Century," in which he pointed out that there were twenty-one great measures of legislation which were being wanted and kept back by the indolence and incapacity of the Conservative Government; and in a subsequent article, he added eight supplementary laws which were imperatively demanded. Now, gentlemen, would you be surprised to learn that not a single one of these twenty-nine measures of legislation has been passed by Mr. Gladstone himself during the three Sessions in which he has reigned supreme in the House of Commons? Three measures were passed in the first Session. There was the Employers' Liability Bill, which did considerable good, although I see that the working men are at present much dissatisfied with it; there was the Burials Bill, of which I have not so very much to say: it gave the Dissenters the privilege of being buried in English churchyards without English Church services; and there was the Ground Game Bill, which gave farmers the privilege of shooting the landlords' rabbits without paying for them. Now, that was the whole of the legislation of Mr. Gladstone's first Session, and as to his two subsequent Sessions, they may be most fittingly described in words borrowed from a German professor, in a great and exhaustive work which he wrote on the subject of Iceland. He treated, in that learned way that all Germans do, of the history, the geography, the politics and the institutions of Iceland, and then he added a new chapter, headed "On the snakes of Iceland," and it consisted of these words, "There are no snakes in Iceland." Gentlemen, if you wrote the history of Mr. Gladstone's Administration, when you came to the article of legislation, you might head the chapter, "The legislation of Mr. Gladstone," and finish the chapter by saying, "There was no legislation by Mr. Gladstone." During the last two Sessions of Parliament, the whole time of the British Parliament has been employed in legislating for Mr. Parnell, or legislating against Mr. Parnell; but for all useful purposes connected with England, Scotland or Wales, the members of that Parliament might as well have been sitting in their own arm-chair, improving their minds. Each Queen's Speech has contained a shadowy list of phantom measures which were to be passed in the ensuing Session. You have been promised Criminal Code Bills, Bankruptcy Bills, Patent Bills, Bills for Reforming the Municipality of London, for Preventing Corrupt

Practices, Bills for County Government, County Franchise, Bills for Restraining Rivers, and for half-a-dozen other subjects which I forget, but at the end of the Session you find that not one of these phantoms has been changed into substantial and real bodies—either they have never been brought forward at all, or if they have been brought forward, it was only to be sacrificed at the annual massacre of the innocents. But no doubt, gentlemen, as I say, there has been a certain amount of legislation for Ireland, and it is to that I next desire to call your attention. Now, the subject of Ireland is not a very pleasant one, and it is one of which we have been for the last two years wearied, and more than wearied; but still it is one to which I must call your attention, though briefly and in general terms. Now gentlemen, the policy of Mr. Gladstone to Ireland may be described as a policy of plundering one party in order to pacify another party—and a policy of plunder has been consistently pursued by him, not only in his present, but in his previous Administration. It was that policy which he adopted in 1870, when he rendered it impossible for the landlord to recover possession of his own land from his own tenant, at the termination of that tenant's tenancy, unless he consented to pay that tenant—who had no longer got any right or title to the land—a sum of money which might amount to seven years' rent. Gentlemen, that law is calculated to have transferred a sum of thirty millions from the pockets of the landlords to the pockets of the tenants. It was the same policy in 1880 which made him attempt to extend that law to a purpose which had been previously excluded from it, namely, to the case of a landlord evicting his tenant for non-payment of rent; but in that he failed, because the majority of the Liberal Peers in the House of Lords refused to pass his Act for him. It was the same policy which, in 1881, made him transform all the landlords of Ireland from being the owners of the land into merely being claimants to a rent-charge, which rent-charge was itself diminished twenty-five per. cent. by the acts of the Commissioners who were appointed to decide on its amount. Gentlemen, the result of that law is calculated as having transferred a sum of eighty millions from the pockets of the Irish landlords to those of the Irish tenants. It was the same policy which in the present year dictated an Arrears of Rent Bill, by virtue of which a landlord, to whom perhaps five or six years' rent is owing, is forced to give a receipt in full upon being paid two years' rent, one-half of which is not even paid by the tenant himself, but by the Government. Gentlemen, how many millions this will transfer from the pockets of the landlords to the tenants no one has yet been able to ascertain; Mr. Gladstone himself calculates it at two or three, but no one knows whether he is right or wrong. I think, therefore, that I am not incorrect in saying that as regards Ireland Mr. Gladstone's policy is a policy of

plunder. We may all have our own opinions as to whether it is just to plunder one party in order to pacify another. I am old-fashioned enough to think that it is not, and cannot be, just; but we shall probably agree upon this, that to plunder one party *without* pacifying the other is not merely a crime, but a blunder, and I say that Mr. Gladstone has not merely committed the crime, but he has committed the blunder. Gentlemen, I appeal to you, has his policy pacified Ireland? As Sir Robert Carden reminded you, a few days before he had taken up the reins of Government, Mr. Gladstone made a speech in which he said that at that time Ireland was in a state of contentment and satisfaction, such as had not been known for the previous period of six years. Well, gentlemen, before six months had elapsed, what was the state of Ireland? The whole island was in a state of chronic rebellion. The Queen's Government had ceased to exist, there was no law recognized in the land except the law of the Land League; murder stalked over the length and breadth of the land with impunity, outrage and anarchy prevailed such as would disgrace the government of a Bulgarian prince or a Turkish Pasha—each fresh message of peace was answered back by a yell of derision and defiance. The "Kilmainham surrender" was greeted by the Phœnix Park murders, and the last message of peace and concord, which was to conciliate everybody—the Rent Arrears Bill—has been met by the shrieks of Mr. Dillon, the howls of Mr. Davitt, and by an invitation from Mr. Parnell for all the members to meet in conference on the 17th of this month at Dublin, and plan a new and more extended a wider and more powerful agitation, against the law and peace of Great Britain. Therefore, gentlemen, I say that the policy of plunder has not even succeeded as a policy of pacification, and I go further than that, and say that such a policy never can and never will succeed from the very nature of things. If you bribe people to obey the law, sooner or later you will find that you have briled them to break the law—if you reward agitation you will encourage agitation, and if you encourage agitation you foster crime, and if you foster crime, sooner or later you must put it down by coercion, and that, gentlemen, is what we have found in the present state of things. During the two years of Mr. Gladstone's Administraton there has been more coercion than there has been during the twenty years that preceded it. We have seen a spectacle hitherto unknown to our constitution: we have seen two occasions on which laws directed against the people of Ireland, or against the representatives of Ireland, have been rushed through the House of Commons, by the simple expedient of chucking the Irish representatives neck and crop into Westminster Hall; we have seen the spectacle of hundreds of the chosen leaders and representatives of the Irish people lying in gaol without a trial, without the hope of a trial, and without any definite charge made

against them which they had a possibility of meeting; and although at present outrages have somewhat diminished in Ireland, they have diminished by the application of a coercive law stricter and more severe than has been applied to the people of Ireland during the memory of the present or the past generation. I do not say that this coercion is unjust, or is not required, but what I do say is that the system of coercion is the natural and necessary result of the previous system of caressing. If you caress criminals at one moment, you have to coerce them the next. We have had the caressing and we have had the coercing, but what we have not had applied to the people of Ireland is even-handed justice. I believe that if Mr. Gladstone had had the justice to apply the ordinary resources of the English law to the people of Ireland—if he had applied these resources to them without favour and without fear—I believe that no coercion would have been necessary, and that the terrific annals of crime that have stained the sister island for the last two years would have been as unknown as they were during the Conservative Administration. Now, gentlemen, I pass to the subject of foreign policy, and I do not intend to say a word upon the subjects either of Afghanistan or of the Transvaal, tempting as both of these subjects may be; but I do wish to address you upon the subject which is uppermost in the thoughts of everyone at the present moment—I mean the subject of Egypt. Now, gentlemen, in the first place I wish to be perfectly frank and candid to the present Administration. I am not one of those who think that our intervention in Egypt has had the object or the effect of crushing the national party. I do not myself believe that there ever has been a national party in Egypt, but, if there was, I am quite certain that Arabi Pasha did more to crush that party than any person in Egypt ever did. Nor, again, am I one of these who think that England was without a right or just reason for interfering in Egypt. I believe that at the recent crisis, as we found it after the 11th of June, England would have forfeited her place, not only as a great European Power, but as a great Asiatic Power, unless she had intervened, and intervened effectually, in stopping the state of disorder that had arisen in Egypt; and I think we may all be proud of seeing that, after a period of vacillation, hesitation, and effacement, England had at last the courage to conceive and to carry out an independent course of policy, to take up that position in Europe which she, as the Empire nation of the world, has ever maintained. I think, too, we may all be proud as Englishmen over the feats of our Navy and of our Army during the campaign. I believe that a thrill passed through every Cabinet of Europe on the night when it was announced that the fire of our ironclads had made the fortifications of Alexandria crumble into dust; and I think we ought to be proud, as Englishmen ever have been proud, of the glory of their seamen, not only in the feats of those great

ironclads, the "Inflexible" and her sisters, but also at the thought of those little vessels, the "Condor" and the "Bittern," steaming about within 200 yards of great forts, a single shot of anyone of which would have sunk them to the bottom. Gentlemen, when we think of a sight like that, we may feel with pride that the days of Nelson and Collingwood are renewed in the days of Sir Beauchamp Seymour. Equally, too, have we reason to be proud of our brave troops; and I do not know which is more likely to make us proud—the spectacle of the Guards with a Royal Prince at their head, toiling through the sands of Egypt, in a burning sun, in the hope that they might reach the battle which they heard raging in front; or the Household Brigade charging by moonlight through the batteries and the serried ranks of Egypt; or that wild wave of fire which burst on the morning of the 13th September over the ramparts of Tel-el-Kebir. If we are proud of our men, we may also be proud of the General who directed them; and we may think with pride on Sir Garnet Wolseley, who, before he left these shores for Egypt, put his finger upon the very spot at which the final stand was to be made, and predicted that on the 15th of September the war in Egypt would be over; and it was on the 15th September that he wrote the dispatch which announced that "Cairo was in our hands, and Arabi Pasha was our prisoner." We may also be proud—and we may give the Government every credit for it—of the skill and energy shown by the administrations which put the army in the field. We may be proud to think that, within six weeks of the day that our troops left Portsmouth on the one side, and Bombay on the other, they entered as victors into the capital of Egypt. Gentlemen, these are all things to be proud of, and, so far as the Government has contributed to this success, I give them an unstinted measure of approbation and applause, and I think we, as Conservatives, may be proud to think that at no single moment has a Conservative voice been raised in factious opposition to the Government of the day. We have not met the rebuff which fell upon those who opposed Lord Beaconsfield, for they predicted misfortunes when nothing followed but success; they predicted disgrace when nothing followed but honour; and they had at last to sit down in the presence of their countrymen and feel that they were ashamed, because their countrymen had succeeded. I trust such shame will never fall upon the Conservative Party. Here my praise to the present Administration with reference to the Egyptian matters must cease. The more successful the War Department has been, the more thoroughly has the Foreign Office to acknowledge its failure. The object of diplomacy is to avert war, and, when war has taken place, it is because the Foreign Office has been at fault, and never has there been an occasion, I believe, in which a war was more recklessly and unnecessarily brought on than on the present

occasion. I believe that the whole Egyptian war arose from this: because the Liberal Government could not make up their minds at what period they would fight; because they had not courage to say to Arabi Pasha, "So far thou shalt go and no further." I believe that we drifted into the Egyptian war as we drifted into the Crimean war, because we had not the courage to announce beforehand that we had a particular policy, and that we were determined to carry out that policy at any cost. Gentlemen, that is a grave accusation to make, but I do not ask you to accept that accusation upon my authority or upon the authority of any other person; I wish you to form your own judgment upon the foundation of that accusation, and for that purpose I would solicit your attention to a short recital of the events which preceded and led up to the Egyptian war. I shall make no single statement which does not rest upon official documents emanating from the Government. But I am anxious to place the facts before you, because few people read Blue Books, and I have not yet seen any address by any public speaker in which the subject has been fully discussed. Now, the whole of the present troubles arose from the events of the 9th of September of last year. Even before that time the officers of the Egyptian army had been in a state of smouldering insubordination, but on that day they broke out into open mutiny. Arabi Bey headed an outbreak of the troops in Cairo against the Khedive, and compelled him to dismiss his Ministers, and to accept a Prime Minister named by the army. From that moment, of course, Arabi was master of Egypt. One of his alleged grievances was that Tewfik had sold his country to the English—therefore, Egypt had fallen into the hands of an enemy of England. Now, I would ask you what you think Lord Palmerston would have done in this crisis? More than forty years ago, Mehemet Ali, a great soldier and a great statesman, was in the midst of a career of victory over the Turks, which brought him into conflict with British policy. He was supported in this career by all the influence of France. Yet Lord Palmerston directed his ambassador in Paris to say, with all due diplomatic formulas, that if the English offers were not accepted, he would relieve the French of all further trouble with Algiers, and would chuck Mehemet Ali into the Nile! Mehemet Ali accepted our terms, and kept out of the Nile. I think if Lord Palmerston had been Foreign Minister last year, he would have telegraphed to Cairo, that if Arabi did not at once proceed to Alexandria, as he had been ordered to do, he would send a battalion of marines to fetch him, and an ironclad to receive him when he arrived. What did Lord Granville do? He was well aware of the gravity of the situation, and of the momentous issues to which it might lead. The only suggestion he could offer was, that an attitude of a calming and pacifying character should be maintained in Egypt! In other words, that the representative of

England should be instructed to speak with bated breath and whispered humbleness in presence of the audacious usurper who had just carried out a successful mutiny against the friend of Great Britain. Naturally, Arabi, with the instinct of an Oriental, leaped to the conclusion that a course so detrimental to our interests could only be taken because we were afraid. Well, gentlemen, the next step was the presentation to the Khedive of what is known as the Dual Note, in January last. This contained a formal announcement by France and England that "the two Governments being closely associated in the resolve to guard by their united efforts against all causes of complication, internal or external, which might menace the order of things established in Egypt, do not doubt that the assurance publicly given of their formal intentions in this respect will tend to avert the dangers to which the Government of the Khedive might be exposed, and which would certainly find England and France united to oppose them." Brave words, if only they had been followed by equally brave acts. But, at the very moment of signing the words, Lord Granville put it beyond all doubt that no acts whatever would follow. He accepted the draft with an express reservation that the Government "must not be considered as committing themselves thereby to any particular mode of action, if action should be found necessary." Even this reservation might be misunderstood to mean (indeed, M. Gambetta did misunderstand it as meaning) that the Government would take some action, if necessary, though they did not bind themselves to any particular action. Even this doubt was carefully cleared up by a further declaration to all the Embassies, that the Government had not agreed to promise the Khedive material support. But in the name of Heaven, if the English Government had not promised the Khedive material support, what had they promised him, or had they promised him anything? And if they did not intend to support him in the hour of his danger, what did they mean by saying that France and England would be found united to oppose the danger? And if the words meant nothing, was it becoming the dignity of England to use them? Did it not come to this, that we were playing a mere game of brag with Arabi, and that we commenced the game by throwing our cards upon the table, and showing that we had nothing in our hand? We brandished in his face something which might be taken for a sword, and then we called the whole world to witness that it was an empty scabbard. Well, gentlemen, whatever effect the Note might have had upon Arabi, the text, coupled with the gloss, did not alarm him very much. Things went from bad to worse. Colonel Arabi Bey turned himself into General Arabi Pasha, Minister of War and Marine, and altered the constitution of Egypt so as to concentrate the whole executive power into his own hands, and to reduce the Khe-

dive into a puppet, and the controllers into mere *marionettes*. In the end of March Sir A. Colvin wrote these words: "It is for Her Majesty's Government to decide when, and at what point, anarchy is established. But, to cover my own responsibility, I wish to say in the clearest words that, in my judgment, the country is at this moment without an efficient Government and in imminent danger of disorder. The War Minister controls the Khedive and Council; the army controls the War Minister. The temper and spirit of the mass of officers, so far as I can learn, is threatening and insubordinate; and I should not at any moment be surprised to hear of some serious incident, of which it is impossible to foretell the consequences." And then Lord Granville conceived the most extraordinary device which ever entered into the brain of man. It was that everything would be set right by sending three generals to Egypt, a Frenchman, an Englishman, and a Turk. These three generals, who represented utterly conflicting ideas of policy, were to agree on some one plan of action, and then were gravely to call upon Arabi, who was equally at variance with all three, and tell him what he was to do. What would have happened when Arabi bowed the three officers out of his room, no one will ever know. The scheme was quietly pooh-poohed by the French, and only survives in Lord Granville's regretful memory. But that he should ever have conceived and propounded such a device shows how utterly unable he was to grasp the gravity of the situation, or to provide a fitting remedy. Well, gentlemen, the next step was, that at the instigation of the French Cabinet, six ironclads, three of each nation, were sent to Alexandria. They arrived on the 20th May, and on the 25th the agents of France and England plucked up heart of grace, and tendered a Note to the President of the Council, in which they called upon the Ministry to resign, and upon Arabi and the other leading military Pashas to quit the country. They said in their Note that they not only recommended these conditions, but, "if necessary, would insist on their fulfilment." This looked serious. At last France and England were united to oppose the enemies of the Khedive. The conditions were admirable, if only we had insisted on their fulfilment. But that was the very thing we did not do. What happened was this—the Ministry resigned; the army threatened the Khedive with deposition, and the principal inhabitants of Cairo with death, if he did not restore the Ministry with Arabi at its head. Tewfik sent for the Consuls-General and asked their advice. They had none to give. So they walked out at one door, and Arabi and his colleagues walked back at another. Our Consuls-General pocketed their ultimatum. Our fleet remained calmly basking in the sunshine of Egypt. Everything remained as before, except that the two Western Powers had been insulted, and that Arabi was supreme. Then came the 11th of June, and the riots in Alexandria.

Hundreds of Europeans were massacred in the streets of Alexandria by the police in view of the soldiery, and, as believed, at the instigation of Arabi Pasha. The English Consul was insulted and wounded, English officers and Englishmen were insulted, wounded, and killed; and still the English Fleet lay basking in the roads of Alexandria, and all that the Admiral could do was to say that anyone who liked might take refuge in the ships. Then the very donkey-boys of Alexandria laughed in our faces; every Englishman in the streets of Alexandria was insulted, and threatened with the anger of Arabi Pasha, as you would threaten a naughty child with the displeasure of its nurse; and the reason was because they began to learn, from the proceedings which I have detailed, that the threats of England were but idle words, which never resulted in acts. Now then, gentlemen, the next scene was the bombardment of Alexandria on the 11th of July, and I cannot help thinking that this bombardment was the greatest mistake in the whole of our policy. Here again, however, I wish to be perfectly candid and fair to the Government. I am not one of those who think that we committed any breach of international law or of international justice in our bombardment of Alexandria. For five weeks earthworks had been erected and armed for no purpose except that of attacking the fleet of a friendly nation lying in a friendly port. These armaments had been forbidden by the order of the Sultan and of the Khedive—the only recognized authority in Egypt—and even Arabi Pasha himself had pretended to countermand them and denied their existence. Therefore, there was no power in Egypt to which we could address ourselves with success for the purpose of keeping our fleet in safety; and I say that, if our fleet had any legitimate object in being there, it was perfectly justified in bombarding and destroying the forts. But what I want to know is this: What was our fleet doing in Alexandria? What right had it there? If it was sent there to maintain the authority and position of the Khedive, then it had allowed the Khedive to become a fugitive from his capital and a cypher in his Court; if it was sent to maintain the honour and dignity of England, then it had allowed the representative of England to be insulted, outraged, and spat upon in the streets of Alexandria; if it was sent to protect life and property, then it had alowed the streets of Alexandria to run red with blood, it had alowed rapine to prevail, it had allowed thirty or forty thousand Europeans to be driven from the shores of Egypt, because neither their lives nor their property were secure, notwithstanding the presence of the Allied Fleet. Therefore, I say if the fleet had any useful object it had utterly failed to carry out that object—but, if it had no useful object, then I say it had no right to bombard the forts of Alexandria merely to maintain its right to anchor in the roads for an empty show and parade. Either we did too little, by not rendering its presence effectual, or we did too much by the bombardment

that ensued—in one or other way I say our policy was a fatal mistake. But, gentlemen, within twenty-four hours a still more fatal mistake followed. Within twenty-four hours followed the conflagration of Alexandria and the destruction of some five millions of property. Whose fault was that? I say emphatically it was the fault of the present Government. For five weeks those armaments had been prepared under the eyes of the Admiral, and he had been daily telegraphing information that these armaments were being prepared; for five weeks the Government must have known that the time would arrive, sooner or later, when it would be necessary to take them with a strong hand; for five weeks they had the opportunity of sending troops who could have landed after the bombardment, but by the time the bombardment had taken place, Sir Beauchamp Seymour had only three hundred marines whom he could possibly land. Even those might have prevented the great calamities which followed, but his instructions strictly bound him not to land a single man, except for the protection of British life; but, inasmuch as every British subject had left before the bombardment, the occasion had not arisen in which he was permitted to land a single man. The Government had had the most express notice that the first attempt at violence, committed by themselves, would lead to an outbreak and to the most terrible and disastrous consequences; they had been informed of this by the Khedive, and by their own representatives, and by the representatives of Italy, Austria, and Germany; they must have known that the first gun that would be fired would be the signal for any calamity and any disorder, and yet they had not the forethought or the courage to send two regiments of men to land and be present to take charge of Alexandria after the Egyptian army was demoralized and driven from its batteries. I say, therefore, gentlemen, that for the whole of the calamities that arose in Alexandria the Government were directly responsible, because they foresaw the necessity of the bombardment, they foresaw and were told the terrible consequences that would result from it; they had the example of the Commune of Paris in 1870—a precedent directly in point—and yet with this foreknowledge, and with this forewarning, they left their Admiral in such a position that he could not land with safety a boat's crew for the preservation of Alexandria. I say, therefore, that in every step of these proceedings they were responsible. Now the popular defence of the Government is this, they say, "It is quite true, we ought, if we could, to have taken earlier and more stringent measures; but at the first, we were seeking the co-operation of the French, then the mandate of the European concert, and then the Turkish intervention, and in order to obtain anyone of, or all of, these three advantages, we refrained from earlier intervention ourselves." There is a great deal of force in this, if they had attained any single thing

they desired : it would have been very important to have obtained French co-operation, but they didn't get it ; it would have been very important to have obtained the mandate of the European concert, but they didn't get it ; and it would have been important to obtain the Turkish intervention, but they didn't get it—or, rather, they didn't get it when they wanted it, and when they got it they didn't want it. Therefore, I say, at every stage of the proceedings, they were abandoning a certain and necessary advantage in order to obtain an uncertain advantage in which they absolutely failed ; and that from beginning to end their diplomacy has been an absolute failure. With an atom of energy, with an atom of courage, they might have put a stop to the whole thing at its commencement ; but, so far from their doing so, they spoke with humble words, they spoke with reservations, they spoke with retractations, so that Arabi and all the Egyptians were misled, and believed that the Government never intended to take a single step of ultimate vigour or determination. I say that the war which has taken place was rendered necessary by themselves, because it was they who misled the Egyptians into committing those serious acts which ultimately rendered that war unavoidable. Gentlemen, this is the charge I make against the English Government. Let us not be deceived, let us not be blinded by the glamour of our present success—that success is a very great one, but, gentlemen, we are not yet out of our difficulties. We have brought ourselves into the most tortuous paths of European policy, we have committed ourselves to a course of procedure in which it is now absolutely necessary for ourselves that we should frame and carry out some plan, and in the framing and carrying out of that plan we shall be met with covert objections from one nation, open opposition from another, and insidious encouragement from a third. We shall have to submit our plans to the cold and cautious criticisms of the European concert. We shall either have to give up what is for our own interest, or have to carry out our interest, not in opposition to Arabi Pasha, not in opposition to the Egyptian troops, but perhaps in opposition to France, and Italy, and Russia. And, gentlemen, if the time should come when we should find ourselves plunged in complications from which there is no escape without disgrace except by war, then, I say, that it is to the present English Government in their course of vacillation and indecision that that result will be due. Gentlemen, I have delayed you far too long already, and I have to thank you most cordially for the indulgence you have shown me. I shall, therefore, only make one more observation before I stop. There may be—and I hope there are—some Liberals in this great assembly, and, if there are, I would say this to them—"If you have such undoubting confidence in Mr. Gladstone, his projects, and his plans, ought it not in some degree to take away from your

confidence, to think that that confidence is not shared by those who have joined in his councils, and sat at his board?" At each fresh crisis which Mr. Gladstone has encountered, he has had to do like the mariner in a storm: he has secured safety by casting overboard part of his freight, and the freight which he has cast over has been one of his own colleagues. Gentlemen, you cannot have a more representative Whig than the Duke of Argyll, but before one year had passed the Duke of Argyll found it necessary to separate himself from Mr. Gladstone and all his works; you cannot have a more representative Radical than Mr. Forster, but even Mr. Forster could not stomach the Kilmainham Treaty; you cannot have a more representative member of that curious collection of opinions which is known as the Birmingham School than Mr. Bright, but even Mr. Bright found it impossible to put up with the bombardment of Alexandria and the war in Egypt. If you are asked to place that undoubting confidence in Mr. Gladstone which is reposed in him by the majority of his party, does it not suggest itself to you to ask, why that confidence cannot be shared by the highest and most prominent representatives of that party itself? I do not ask you as Conservatives whether you place your confidence in Mr. Gladstone's cause – you would not be Conservatives if you did—but I ask any of you who may chance to be Liberals, why you should place greater confidence in Mr. Gladstone than is reposed in him by the Duke of Argyll, by Mr. Forster and Mr. Bright.

ADDRESS

TO THE

CITY OF EDINBURGH

Working-Men's Conservative Association

IN THE

CORN EXCHANGE, DECEMBER 17, 1875,

BY THE

RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF DERBY.

Edinburgh:
PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON,
HUNTER SQUARE.

MDCCCLXXVI.

ADDRESS.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—Much as I have heard of the growth of Conservative feeling in Edinburgh, I confess that I was not prepared for an audience so vast as that which I am about to address. You think, and you think rightly, that any man who undertakes to make you a speech —whatever other qualifications he may or may not possess— ought at least to have the power of making himself heard. Now, my voice is not very powerful, and I am afraid that, let me do what I may, I shall not succeed in making myself audible to many who are present in this vast assemblage. It is not often of late that I have come before an audience such as I have now the pleasure of addressing. Not that I hold such gatherings as this to be a waste of time ; on the contrary, they seem to me to serve a double purpose : they give to those who are engaged in public life an opportunity of saying many things which cannot be conveniently said within the walls of Parliament ; and they give to you, the public, a means of impressing on political men, especially upon those who have, as is unfortunately my case, no constituency to represent, your views and your feelings with greater force and directness than if we were left to gather them from the press. There has not of late been much to talk about or to fight about ; and occupied, as the mover of the address has truly said, with duties which have not allowed me any large amount of leisure, I have, as a rule, kept clear of meetings of this description. But I could not refuse your invitation ; and as you asked me to address you, I make no apology for occupying your time.

Gentlemen, when the large electoral change of 1867 was carried through Parliament, not without some natural doubts and apprehensions as to its possible working, there was one thing—one result—which I believe nobody expected, and that was that within seven years of its creation the new constituency would place in power a Conservative Minister and a Conservative Government. It was the fashion in the years between 1868 and 1874 to talk of the Conservative working-man as if he were an ideal and imaginary being. I think he has shown the reality of his existence pretty clearly by this time. Now the ground is changed, and the language held is, "Oh, poor fellows, they don't know what they are doing. They have no politics; they go entirely by personal preferences; and if the Conservative candidate is the more popular man locally, they vote for him, and not for his opinions." Well, I don't hold with those who would exclude personal feeling and the judgment formed upon individual character from political choice. A man who has run straight in private life will probably do the same in Parliament. The members whom you send to Westminister are not mere voting machines. They are not like those persons on whom, by the American Constitution, the right of choosing a President rests, but who are merely nominees of their party, pledged to vote for the candidate of the party's election, and have no individual voice in the matter. A member of the House of Commons exercises, and must exercise, a large and wide discretion on many questions as to which he has given no pledge, and as to which his constituency itself has perhaps hardly made up its mind. If, therefore, it be true that the Conservative working-man looks to persons as well as to professions—if he does not think that the sole qualification for political life consists in willingness to swallow any number of pledges—I say, for one, the Conservative working-man is quite right; but I do not believe that the tendency to

which I have referred is one which, in any very considerable degree, has turned the fate of elections. I believe that there is in every class, and in the working-class as much as any other, a Conservative feeling, which is deep and strong—a feeling which may at times be masked, and whose influence may be overborne by some grievance of the day or some popular cry, but which reappears when those disturbing influences are removed. And when people ask why should a working-man be a Conservative? I answer, why should he not? Of one thing he may be quite sure, that all disorder, all revolutionary tendencies, everything that creates popular panic or even general uneasiness, falls more directly and heavily on him than on the members of any other class. Whatever troubles the waters of society, whatever frightens the timid and the rich—and money, as money, is always timid—the artisan and the labourer are the first sufferers. The shop-keepers or the manufacturers lose their profit, but he loses his daily bread. I think that is a fair reason why the working-man should not be less interested than his neighbours in the maintenance of social order. But, I may be asked, is it not to be expected that he will wish to improve the condition of his class? Can he, if he cares about anything outside his private interests, not desire to see his fellow-workers in possession of more of the comforts and advantages of life than they have now; and that being so, will he not therefore give his vote on the popular side? My answer to that is, that I accept the premises, but I don't see that they lead up to the conclusion. Popular politicians have never given any man better wages or a better house to live in. They may, indeed, profess to remove grievances of a kind such as law can deal with; but where are those grievances with us? What has become of them? Is the working-man taxed above his fair share? Why, if he is a teetotaller, he contributes literally nothing to the revenue,

except some thirty per cent. on the tea or coffee which he may use. Nearly every other article of popular consumption is altogether free—income tax, house tax, and stamp duties don't touch him. If he likes his beer and his tobacco—and I for one see no reason why he should not—he pays on these articles like everybody else; and since we must have taxes, taxes that fall on luxuries are probably the fairest of all. Is the working-man subject to exceptional legislation? So far from that, whenever any legislation of an exceptional kind has been passed of late years, it has been in his favour and not against him. In the case of the two Acts of last session amending the labour laws—Parliament has not hesitated to modify rules of law, rules of long standing, and still applicable to other analogous cases, because they might be brought to bear hardly on the members of trades' unions. Take another instance. We are very jealous in Parliament, and most reasonably jealous, of any legislative interference with the principles of demand and supply; we are always reluctant to extend the functions of the Executive and the Legislature beyond those which have been immemorially ascribed to them. As a general principle, we should say that the kind of house that a man lives in is a question between himself and his family; but in the large towns great difficulty has been experienced by members of the artisan class in finding healthy dwellings, and Parliament has in consequence gone out of its ordinary course in giving to local authorities exceptional powers and exceptional facilities to meet that want. Take another case. As a rule, the question whether a man is paid for work done by him in cash or otherwise is a question to be regulated entirely and absolutely by arrangement between employers and employed. It is a matter of free contract. That is the rule in all the ordinary transactions of life; but many years ago complaint was made that, in some manufac-

turing industries, the workman was unfairly dealt with because he was paid partly in food or other articles which he had to buy at a certain shop in which his employer was interested; and it was urged that he was thereby placed in a position of undue dependence and constraint. There was a strong feeling on the subject, and Parliament again went out of its way to prohibit a practice not in itself immoral nor contrary to economical rules, but which was judged to be open to abuse; and by a succession of Acts, called the Truck Acts, it has enforced the prohibition of paying the operative otherwise than in hard cash. How, again is the working-man situated as regards the possession of political power? Why, he is master of the situation. His class can, if it chooses, outvote all other classes put together. He is not likely to care or to wish to do that; but again, I say, having under the British Constitution, as it exists, supreme political power in their hands, why on earth should working-men be otherwise than Conservative when that Constitution is concerned? It used to be the fashion to say—"Look at America—look at the United States—there is a country—no wars—no debt, hardly any taxation, and every man has got a vote." Well, but since then the United States have had a tremendous civil war. They have got a debt, and a heavy one. They have got taxes which are probably a good deal more burdensome than ours—taking State and Federal taxation together. They have got a Civil Service which, not to say anything offensive, is not generally supposed to be quite as clean-handed or as efficient as ours—and whereas in this country a change of popular feeling reflected in Parliament may upset any Government in a week, in America there is no reason why a President, once selected, should not, during the four years of his tenure of office, use the power of the Executive in a sense opposed to that of the legislative body. We wish nothing but

good to our American friends. They have their ways and we have ours; but, on the whole, I venture to think that, in matters of administration and politics, it is possible that they may have as much to learn from us as we from them. Great stress, again, is laid, by a certain class of politicians, on the supposed fact that, in these islands, only a rich man has a chance of becoming an owner of the soil; and that is held up as one of those wrongs which ought to be remedied before any poor man should call himself a Conservative. But how does the matter stand? In the first place, there is enormous exaggeration as to the fact. It used to be asserted again and again—and even men so eminent as Mr Mill and Mr Bright endorsed the assertion—that the whole soil of the country was divided between 30,000 proprietors. I never believed that story, and I was fortunate enough, some years ago, to be able to induce the late Government to take steps to test its truth. We have not the full returns yet; but I believe the number of owners will come out more nearly six hundred thousand than thirty thousand, or twenty times what it was put at. But why should it stop there? What is there in the state of our law to make it stop there? No man who reads the advertisements in the papers can venture to contend that there is not land enough to meet all possible wants. If there be a wish among working-men to become owners of some small piece of land, what is easier than to form companies which shall buy up estates and divide them, as is now done in the case of house-property in towns, so that small lots may be purchased and the payment spread over a term of years? Whether such a speculation would answer or not, I cannot decide; and, personally, I should not be inclined to recommend any man whose savings were small to put them into land. But what I do say is, that if working-men have that desire, there is no obstacle in our laws, none in our administrative arrangements, none even in our national habits, to

make its gratification impossible or difficult. The sole obstacle in the way, the legal cost of transferring small pieces of land, has been dealt with by recent legislation, and we hope done away. My argument, then, comes to this—that there is nothing in our laws and institutions as they exist to prevent working-men from improving their condition to whatever point may be attainable by them, and that there is nothing therefore to prevent their assuming a Conservative attitude towards those laws and institutions compatibly with self-respect, and consistently with their honourable and natural feeling for their own class. Well then, gentlemen, what is the other side of the question? A Conservative policy, as it seems to me, tells its own story. To distrust loud professions and large promises; to place no confidence in theories for the regeneration of mankind, however brilliant and ingenious; to believe only in that improvement which is steady and gradual, and accomplished step by step; to compare our actual condition, not with the ideal world which thinkers may have sketched out, but with the condition of other countries at the present day, and with our own country at other times; to hold fast what we have till we are quite sure that we have got hold of something better instead—these are common-place and familiar ideas, but they express well enough the prevailing tendency of the Conservative mind, as you see it in these islands. You may agree or disagree with them, but at least you know what they mean. I am not equally sure that I do know what Liberalism, in the party sense, the Liberalism of the great Liberal connection, is supposed to imply. The name was a very happy one, whoever hit upon it—because, according to the construction the speaker puts upon it, it may signify anything or nothing. For a long time while I have been looking out for something like a definition of its meaning, but neither accomplished journalists nor M.P.'s on the stump have helped me

much. On the Continent, the word has a definite sense. A Liberal is there understood to be an opponent of priestly power and of the Roman Catholic Church ; but that won't do here, for some of the strongest opponents of the Catholic priesthood are staunch Conservatives ; and till very lately, and, indeed, as long as I sat in the House of Commons, the Liberal party in Parliament was supported by the votes of Ultramontane Irish members. Probably it would be so still but for the Home Rule movement, which has made that alliance impossible. Does the Liberalism of the Liberal party imply equality among religious sects, and consequently hostility to ecclesiastical establishments ? Hardly that ; for the late respected leader of the Liberal party—most of his colleagues, and the bulk of what used to be called the Whig pary, are steady supporters on principle of the English Establishment. Does it mean respect for constitutional as opposed to despotic notions of government ? But that is not a party distinction among us. Nobody that I ever heard of proposes to shut up the House of Commons or to gag the press. Does Libealism, again, mean the principle of securing for the individual the utmost freedom from State interference, or from needless restrictions of law compatible with public safety and convenience ? There was a time, some thirty years ago when that might have been accepted as at least a pretty accurate description—when the removal of personal restrictions was to a considerable extent identified with Liberal politics. But all that has gone by, and, on the contrary, there is no more marked feature of the new Radical creed than the strong disposition which it shows towards what I may call democratic despotism. One, and that a very powerful, school of Liberals hold not only that every parent should be compelled to send his child to some school—which may be a reasonable proposition,—but that only one kind of school shall be suppored by

the State, and all others discouraged, and if possible extinguished by State competition. Another set of gentlemen, represented by Sir Wilfrid Lawson and the United Kingdom Alliance, think that, because they prefer water, the very essence of Liberalism consists in making it practically impossible for a man, unless he has a cellar of his own, to get himself a glass of beer. And it is a further indication of the same tendency that in modern legislation, as directed by the Liberal party, the old theory, right or wrong, of respecting freedom of contract, is more and more disregarded, and, as in the case of the Irish Tenant Right Bill, parties are forbidden to contract themselves out of the provisions of the law. I don't want to go into details on that subject, which would lead me a long way; but I do affirm, and I am not afraid of being contradicted, that not absence of interference, but increased interference, with the relations of individual life is the distinctly-marked tendency of the modern Liberal creed. That is a tendency not free from danger, for two reasons—first, because it throws on the State a variety of duties which the State is not accustomed or well-fitted to discharge; and next, because, as a consequence of that increase of State power, it intensifies the struggles of politics, since no man knows to what extent his business life and his home life may be interfered with by the legislation of an adverse majority. Still, I don't suppose that any Liberal member would take as his watchword increased restrictions on personal freedom; and I come back therefore to the question which I asked before—What is the essence of the Liberal creed? What is that which all Liberals have and all Conservatives have not? I want to argue the matter fairly. I don't wish to take advantage of accidental differences, to represent small cliques as if they were important sections of the party to which they belong; but the Permissive Bill party, the teetotallers—I won't call them the temperance party, be-

cause that is begging the question—are not a small section. They are important in numbers, not certainly in Parliamentary strength, but among the great town constituencies of England, and, I daresay, here also; and they are stronger than mere numbers would make them, for they are animated by all the eagerness and enthusiasm of reformers. Nor can you call the question of Church Establishments a small one. It is a question so vast that even politicians do not like to touch it; but with half the Liberal party in favour of disestablishment and the other half against it, can it be said that Liberalism, as such, has any opinion on the subject? Oh, but we are told there is one vital point on which all Liberals are agreed, and that is the extension of the franchise. Well, are they agreed? Lord Hartington, the new leader in the House of Commons—to whose ability, in that position, I willingly bear my humble testimony—won't support household suffrage in the counties. Mr. Lowe, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and some others, take the same view. Is that agreement? Can a party treat as its vital principle a question on which its own leader, just appointed, goes into the opposite lobby or stays away? I don't wish to speak ungenerously or unkindly of our political opponents. They have shown temper in defeat and a commendable absence of factious spirit during the last two years. If they don't seem exactly to know where they are going or what they mean to do next, that is a situation in which many good men have been placed before and will be again. For the time, their function is that of criticism. That is not a difficult duty nor a disagreeable one; and I have no doubt they will perform it in a satisfactory manner. I have heard it said that signs were showing themselves of discontent in some quarters, and that we should have to reckon with interests disappointed, because what they expected had not been done for them, and that a reaction from the decision of

the elections of 1874 was at hand. Well, I do not undertake to predict the future. All I can say is, that I can see no signs of any such result at present. Within the last two months we have had vacancies in two of the most important constituencies in England—one in a division of Lancashire, and the other in a division of Surrey—both constituencies very populous and very wealthy, and where any talk of landlord influence or dictation would be simply absurd. Well, in both those constituencies—where one might suppose parties would be evenly balanced—Conservative candidates were returned without opposition, the Liberal party forming a deliberate judgment, and I doubt not that it was a sound judgment, that it was useless for them to contest these seats. That is all I have to say on party matters.

As to legislation, you will not expect me to tell you much. It is too late to talk of last session and too early to discuss what we shall do in that which is coming. I don't promise you sensational law-making; but I fancy we shall have plenty of work for Parliament to do; and we must try to avoid the mistake which every Government has made that I can remember—and I don't except our own—the mistake of launching more bills than we can reasonably hope to carry.

I cannot tell you what questions we shall deal with next session; but I can tell you that, if we pass the next half-dozen years in Downing Street, there are plans enough in the pigeonholes of the various offices to occupy Parliament during that time at least. The chief difficulty we have to contend with is of a peculiar kind. Measures which have been taken up as a party cry—Irish Church, Army Purchase, Ballot, and the like—if they are apt to be vehemently opposed, are also sure to be warmly supported. Opposition generates enthusiasm. But measures of administration, measures of a neutral character, are apt to go down, as it were, in a calm. Everybody

approves of them in principle, but many people criticise them in detail; and even of those who agree, not many will lose their dinners in order to pass them. We have had trouble in that way before, and may again. All we can promise is to do our best to meet it. I won't talk to you at length about foreign affairs, though I may have a word or two to say about them elsewhere before I leave Edinburgh. We have on our hands more than one difficult and perplexing question; and, where opinion is divided, we cannot complain if our course, whatever it may be, is exposed to criticism. The eternal Eastern question is before us again; and I for one have no idea that the year 1876 will see it finally and permanently settled. It is a good omen that, so far as I can judge, every Government which has to deal with it—and it is a matter which necessarily concerns all Europe—seems inclined to do so in a spirit of moderation and caution. Still, however moderate statesmen may be—however little of mischief-making or intrigue may be going no—the matter itself is full of embarrassment for all parties concerned. What we do or determine in regard to it will be frankly laid before Parliament. In our diplomacy, so far as the action of this country is concerned, there will be no mystery and no reserve. You may have seen in the newspapers that there has been a good deal of sensation, both abroad and at home, created by that transaction into which we have entered, of buying up some of the shares of the Suez Canal. I hold that to have been a wise step. It has certainly been a popular one; and I am prepared to defend it if necessary. But I must add that it would not have been a wise step nor an honest one if it had borne the construction which has been occasionally placed upon it. It is hardly necessary to disclaim any such notions as those which have been imputed to us—a wish to establish an English protectorate over Egypt, an interested reversal of our

policy on the whole Eastern question, or an intention to take part in a general scramble for territory which does not belong to us. We wanted, and we have obtained, additional security for that which is to us a necessity—free and uninterrupted passage through Egypt to India. We felt it to be essential that that great highway, over which we have even now more than three-fourths of the traffic, should not be exclusively in the hands of the foreign shareholders of a foreign company. An opportunity was afforded us of acquiring a right in it, and that opportunity we used. There was no deep-laid scheme in the matter. We had not a week to consider it from the first moment when we heard that the sale was intended, and our first idea was not so much to buy the property for ourselves as to prevent it from changing hands at all. I am happy to believe that in foreign countries there has been little, if any, of that jealousy and suspicion excited which was predicted by some persons as a probable consequence. We have stated clearly what we want and why we want it, and Europe is accustomed to believe what we say. We seek no exclusion, no monopoly, only a secure passage for ourselves ; and that same security we are willing that all the world should enjoy. As to the financial aspect of the bargain, though that is not the most important, I see no reason why the State should lose a penny by it in the end. We have taken on ourselves a grave responsibility ; but it is a mistake to suppose, as I have seen it supposed, that we have in any degree encroached on the freedom and authority of Parliament. Parliament is perfectly free to ratify or to reject the bargain. If it were rejected, which I don't for a moment contemplate, our course, as a Government, would be clear ; but we have pledged nobody except ourselves. The House of Commons will have the whole matter in its own hands when it assembles ; and, for my part, I don't shrink from any criticism however severe—from any scrutiny, however jealous and minute.

J. WILSON, PRINTER, HUNTER SQUARE, EDINBURGH.

SPEECH

AT THE

ALBERT HALL BANQUET

OF THE

Nottingham Conservative Association,

ON THE

22nd JANUARY, 1880.

BY

VISCOUNT BURY, K.C.M.G.,

Under Secretary of State for War.

DUBLIN:

HODGES, FOSTER, AND FIGGIS,

PUBLISHERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

1880.

[*FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.*]

THE

GREAT CONSERVATIVE DEMONSTRATION IN NOTTINGHAM.

BANQUET AT THE ALBERT HALL.

VISCOUNT BURY, who on rising was received with cheers, said:—

Lord Manvers, ladies and gentlemen, I really feel that at any rate in the presence of the numerous assemblage of ladies which grace your board to-night—(applause)—I ought, previous to any remarks which I am am about to make to you, to utter an apology for not appearing before you in what might be called a wedding garment. (Loud applause.) I will ask you to put the blame of that, not upon any disrespect for you or for the ladies around, but upon the broad shoulders of the Great Northern Railway Company, for they have lost my portmanteau. (Loud applause.) I feel, however, that I shall easily be excused by an audience so enthusiastic as yourselves, and particularly when I see in the galleries around me the true blue colour, and if you have not nailed it to the mast, you have at any rate tied it to the balconies. (Applause.)

Gentlemen, this banquet, at which you have been kind enough to ask me to respond to the toast of her Majesty's Ministers, will be one of the last which takes place before we enter upon real work in Parliament. In a very few days more we shall be done with banqueting, junketing, and pleasure, and real business will begin, and at the time when you meet here again you will meet not for pleasure, not for fun, but for the real business of an election. (Applause.)

Now, gentlemen, Lord Manvers has expressed in most graceful and eloquent terms the feelings which you entertain for her Majesty's Ministers. I only wish that it had fallen not to me to return thanks for those compliments which you have paid us, but to one better known to you, well known to all around me—I mean Lord John Manners. Much as I value the honour of appearing among you and of thanking you for this toast, I really wish that Lord John Manners stood in my place to receive your congratulations to-night. (Applause.)

Gentlemen, when I opened the morning papers yesterday, and my eye caught the speeches that had been made at Birmingham on the previous evening by Sir Wm. Harcourt, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Chamberlain, I at once thought that it would be my lot to-night to reply to the speeches which were then made. In the fire of Parliamentary eloquence in which we have been lately engaged, no sooner has one fallacy been repelled than

another is repeated, and I thought that I should be called upon to-night to answer the thunder of Birmingham. But, gentlemen, as I read on, I found that we had nothing to fear from Birmingham. (Laughter and cheers—the audience catching the allusion to the Liberal candidate for Nottingham, who hails from Birmingham.) Sir William Harcourt's speech was studded throughout the length and breadth of it with the words "cheers" and "laughter," and, really, I think that some of his jokes were not bad. (A laugh.) At any rate they must have taken him a great deal of time to compose; but, if I might be critical, I should say that they were a little ponderous reading. (Laughter.) But there was one point in that speech which struck me as being so extremely curious that I cut it out of the newspaper, and I have brought it here to-night to read to you. We have long known, gentlemen, that the Whigs as a party have disappeared. They used to be a highly respectable and a highly useful party, but as a party they have now disappeared, for one-half of them have been frightened by Mr. Gladstone into Conservatism—I am one of these myself—and the other half have been coerced by Mr. Gladstone into Radicalism. (Laughter.) Now that is a fact, and we very seldom find a Whig to-day with the candour to confess it so unreservedly as Sir William Harcourt has done. But in Sir William Harcourt's speech I read the following

words:—"I am one of those miserable Whigs of whom we hear so much and see so little, who lead an abject and servile life under the tyranny of Mr. Chamberlain. We have no opinions, no will, no existence of our own. We have to do as we are bid." I am still quoting from Sir William's speech. He says further:—"Being what I am, you will not wonder that when Mr. Chamberlain ordered me to Birmingham. I came." (Laughter.) I confess (continued Lord Bury) that at first it occurred to me that this statement must be one of Sir William's elaborate little jokes, but the more I looked at it, and the more I considered, the more plainly I saw that he spoke in solemn and sober earnest. (Cheers) It must have been painful for Sir William Harcourt to make this admission, but then you know it is obviously and plainly true. (Laughter.) The fact is, that this is what they all have done, it is what they all must do. Who does not remember in the last session of Parliament, who does not remember Lord Hartington's brief assertion of independence, and who does not remember the instantaneous rejection of his leadership which followed on the assertion of that independence? (Hear, hear.) The Liberal party may not perhaps permanently retain Mr. Chamberlain as its leader, but whoever they select you may depend on it he will be a Radical. (Applause.) I do not think, gentlemen, we shall have to look far to find out who the man is to be. Well, the

remainder of Sir William Harcourt's speech consisted about half and half of jokes and prophecies. For my own part I think the prophecies were the most amusing of the two. I am not going to quarrel with Sir William Harcourt's prophecies ; but I think that between the prophecy and its fulfilment there is likely to be a considerable interval. Before that happens, if I mistake not, you, gentlemen, will have a word to say as to the course of events. As the song says—

"Ere the king's crown go down there are crowns to be broke."

Ere Mr. Gladstone comes in there are seats to be won, and I mistake very much if those seats are not hardly and well contested. (Applause.) Well, the Birmingham people, as it appears to me, were singularly unfortunate in the addresses that were made to them. (Applause.) My friend Lord Manvers, in proposing this toast, said truly that Mr. Bright was always energetic, and that he was always willing to give him every credit as an orator. I do not for a moment dispute that Mr. Bright has in his day been one of the finest orators that this country ever produced, but I do not think he gave, on Tuesday, a fair specimen of his old eloquence. In the address which he delivered at Birmingham he did not touch upon current politics at all. He began as far back as 1832, the year in which I was born. (Laughter.) He gave an account of the Reform Bill, of the

bad harvests which took place in 1839, 1840, and 1841; he told us the price of sugar in 184?—(renewed laughter)—and then he went on to the repeal of the Tests and Corporation Acts, and narrated anecdotes repecting the Duke of Wellington at the time of the Catholic emancipation, but anything like current politics—anything to do with to-day or to-morrow, or anything concerning the coming election, not a single word was uttered by Mr. Bright. (Applause.) There was only one thing which reminded me of the old Bright manner. It was when he informed his audience that the Tories were naturally stupid, and that they really must take great pains with themselves, because it was quite impossible that, without taking great pains, they could have become so stupid. (Laughter.) If it had not been for that remark I really should have felt uneasy about the right honourable gentleman's health. (Applause.) Well, now there is one sentence in Sir William Harcourt's speech in which he was truly in earnest, and that was when he said he concurred heart and soul with Mr. Chamberlain in hating the Government and all their works (laughter and applause), and in this respect, in his capacity for good downright, all-round detestation of the Tory party, Mr. Gladstone is even worse than his lieutenant. (Applause.) It was amusing to watch Mr. Gladstone's actions during the late Scotch campaign. You might imagine that even a politician might

receive an address upon attaining his seventieth birthday without abusing his opponents; but no, Mr. Gladstone was at it hammer and tongs before he had spoken fifty words. In one of Dickens's novels there is an amusing character called Mr. Dick. Mr. Dick was engaged on a "Memorial," which he could never finish, because he was totally unable to leave out of it the head of Charles the First. Now it appears to me that Mr. Gladstone is the "Mr. Dick" of politics. (Laughter.) He cannot keep Lord Beaconsfield out of his speeches; and throughout the whole of his Midlothian campaign—whether it was a speech in acknowledgment of those quaint presents of goods or gear with which the Scotch Liberals greeted their champion—(laughter)—or whether in a speech (to quote the words of my friend on the left) from a railway carriage or from the railway platform—before he speaks a dozen words the inevitable abuse of the wicked Lord Beaconsfield is sure to come to the front. (Laughter and applause.) Now, gentlemen, whatever we may think of Mr. Gladstone's position, whatever we may think of the good taste of his speeches, you may be perfectly certain that he is the man we have to deal with at the next election. (Hear, hear.) It is no question of what Lord Hartington may think or may say, or what Mr. Lowe may do, or Mr. Forster, or Mr. Goschen, or any other of the minor lights of Liberalism. De-

pend upon it the main question is, Will you have Lord Beaconsfield, or will you have Mr. Gladstone? (Lord Beaconsfield!)

Now, gentlemen, this is the plain issue before you. Mr. Gladstone, in one of his latest speeches, namely, the St. Andrew's Hall speech at Glasgow, which occupies several columns of the *Times*, sums up the accusation he makes against the Government:—"What," he says, "is the general upshot? Let us look at it together in the fewest words. We have finance in confusion, we have legislation in intolerable arrear, we have honour compromised by the breach of public law, we have distress aggravated by the destruction of confidence, we have Russia aggrandised, and yet estranged. We have Turkey befriended, as we say, but mutilated. We have Europe restless and disturbed. . . . In Africa you have before you the memory of bloodshed, of military disaster, the record of 10,000 Zulus slain for no other offence than their attempt to defend their hearths and homes, their wives and children . . . You have Afghanistan ruined. You have India . . . thrown back in government . . . you have the law broken and the rights of Parliament invaded, and all this by the pestilential activity of Lord Beaconsfield." (Laughter.) Here we have a strong sweeping indictment. Mr. Gladstone spoke nearly a week on end in support of it. Is it true? (No, no!)

It would be impossible within the limits of an after-dinner speech to do more than glance at these various topics, but yet I would ask you to take a general survey, and inquire what was the case under Mr. Gladstone; and what is the case to-day? I will first look abroad. The great disturber of the public peace is Russia. (Applause.) It has been so for years. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Gladstone, in the indictment I have just read to you, declared that Russia has been aggrandised, and he makes it a reproach to Lord Beaconsfield. Does Mr. Gladstone think that we, the people of England, have forgotten his vehement and repeated exhortations to go to the aid of Russia in her "holy" cause? (Applause.) If Russia has been really aggrandised, why is not Mr. Gladstone delighted? (Hear, hear.) It is true that Russia is not aggrandised and not triumphant. (Loud applause.) But only remark how impossible it is to please Mr. Gladstone; for when Lord Beaconsfield opposes Russia he is assailed by all the vehemence of Mr. Gladstone's unrivalled powers of invective for not aiding in the high and holy cause! Now, he is assailed for the very opposite reason, for in the opinion of Mr. Gladstone Russia has been aggrandised. I merely mention this to show how impossible it is to satisfy Mr. Gladstone, whatever Lord Beaconsfield may do.

I now turn to the real facts. Everybody knows

that for the last 200 years Russia has had her eyes constantly on Constantinople. Eight times snce 1700 has Russia waged aggressive war against the Turks; every time, with the exception of the Crimean war, she has added vast territories to her dominions. She absorbed Poland, she dismembered Sweden, she advanced in Central Asia, she advanced first to the Caspian and then up to the very mountains that protected India, but as yet she has not got to Constantinople. (Loud cheers.) She has not got there, but twice during the recollection of us who are now men middle-aged, she has tried to do so. Once she did so when a Liberal Administration was in office, and once she did so when the Conservatives had the reins of power. On the first occasion what happened? Why, vacillating diplomacy, flabby remonstrances invited Russia so far that she could not draw back, and we were plunged into the Crimean war. (Hear, hear.) And what was the result of that war? Why, we were victorious, as England, when she sets her mind to be victorious, would surely be. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) But we were victorious at the price of the loss of an army, and the expenditure of eighty millions of money, £40,000,000 of which remains a permanent addition to our national debt. (Shame.)

Now what happened on the second occasion? On that occasion the same game was played by Russia, but she was met by firm diplomacy.

(Cheers.) As the first war ended in the Treaty of Paris, so the last ended in the Treaty of Berlin. (Renewed cheers.) The Treaty of Paris was purchased at the cost of the destruction of an army, and eighty millions of money, and it was torn up within the lifetime of that same generation, with the consent of the Ministers who made the treaty. (Cheers.) And what about the Treaty of Berlin? We are told that it was a failure, but, even if it were a failure, it has cost us, in comparison with the Treaty of Paris, nothing. We have not added a soldier to the peace establishment of our army, and we have not added a shilling to the national debt. But it is not a failure! Look at what the Treaty of Berlin has gained for us. I ask you is there a Russian soldier on the south of the Balkans? No. Is there even one south of the Pruth? No. Then I say the Treaty of Berlin has succeeded. (Cheers.) Is Bulgaria autonomous? Yes. Is Russia triumphant in Central Asia? No. Then again I say that the Treaty of Berlin is a success, and that when you contrast the cost in blood and in money that followed the nerveless diplomacy of Mr. Gladstone with the firm action of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury—(Great applause)—I need not go any further to ask you which of these are the Statesmen, whom, as a matter of common prudence, Englishmen should prefer? (Hear, hear.)

And now I come to the next indictment—our

national honour is disgraced. Is it? Who deserted Denmark in her death throes? Were they Conservatives or Liberals who did it? Who yielded the Black Sea clauses in the Treaty of Paris—was it the Conservatives or was it the Liberals? Who invented three new rules of international law, and provided that England should be retrospectively judged by those rules in order to find the excuse for paying a tribute to the United States of three millions and a quarter of money? (Applause.) Gentlemen, who ceded the Ionian Islands—was it the Liberals or was it the Conservatives? You know well that during all these events Mr. Gladstone was either at the head of affairs, or a moving spirit in the Cabinet.

And when you come to infringement of domestic law, I should like to know who it was, whether it was a Conservative or whether it was a Liberal, who, after great debates had taken place on the Army Bill in the House of Commons, and the Bill had come to the House of Lords, and had there been debated step by step; who was it that suddenly came down and found that those debates were useless, that the two Houses of Parliament could be put aside, and threw upon the table a Royal warrant abolishing purchase in the army? (Great applause.) Was it a Constitutional act on the part of a Minister to do that? Was it not a high-handed and illegal exercise of the Royal

prerogative? And the name of the Minister who did this was Gladstone!

Now, with regard to Afghanistan, that is the next point upon Mr. Gladstone's indictment. It is known now—it is well known throughout the country that Russia intended to attack us in India through Afghanistan. Afghanistan was to be to her another Servia. Russia was to help unofficially in that campaign; she was to pour in her men unofficially in that campaign; she was to pour in her gold. She did it, and we found it there. (Laughter and cheers.) But who stopped that plot? If it had come off who can doubt that Russia at this moment would have been in possession of our mountain passes, and at the very gates of India? Who stopped that plot? It was the firmness of Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues. To this day the Liberals deny the reality of the Russian attempt; they forget or choose to ignore the fact that the Afghan ruler was but a puppet of Russia, and that the Russian Embassy at Cabul was the advanced guard of a Russian army marching upon India. They chose to argue as if no Imperial questions were at stake, and as if the attack upon Afghanistan were a mere bloodthirsty and monstrous assault on a petty and helpless Prince, instead of what it really was—a blow struck at a great military Power in defence of "*Imperium et Libertas*." We were obliged to go to war; we were forced into that war. It has been truly said it was the policy of the Libe-

rals that drew us there, and upon them must rest the blame. (Loud and long-continued cheering.) We were obliged to undertake it; it was forced upon us, and we have not yet brought it to a conclusion, but very nearly so. It is now in a fairway of settlement. Afghanistan will be very shortly, I feel sure—and you have the means with me of judging—Afghanistan will soon be pacificated firmly, effectually, and as humanely and kindly as is consistent with the thoroughness of the act.

Then, Mr. Gladstone talks about Zuluand being destroyed. Well, everybody knows that the war was not made on Zululand by the consent or by the will of the Government in the first instance. The least amount of candour that it is possible to bring to bear on the subject would grant so much. (Hear, hear.) The orders of the Government were distinctly against that war, but from circumstances into which I will not now go—for I won't blame anybody out of this kingdom—from circumstances into which I will not now go, England was forced into that war. And what choice was there but to carry the war to a successful issue? (Cheers.) Mr. Gladstone so far forgets himself as to declare that that war degenerated into a war of massacre, that ten thousand Zulus were destroyed whose only crime was that they fought for their wives and their children. (A voice—"Bosh.") I say that it is not too much to assert that Mr. Gladstone accuses us in the teeth of patent facts. (Loud cheers.)

Gentlemen, I ask you will it be safe to let Mr. Gladstone come into power? (No, no.) It is known throughout the length and breadth of the land that Mr. Gladstone is curiously ignorant on the subject of foreign politics. He seems to be firmly persuaded that he has only to state some of his vague generalities and diplomatic platitudes to the Courts of Europe, and then there is nothing more to be said. He seems to be perfectly incapable of seeing what everybody else around him sees—what everybody in this country sees—that the power and the credit of England are indissoluble from the safety of England. (Hear, hear.) When he was in power before he consented to submit to see the influence of England disregarded, and he himself has declared he would pursue the same course again. What he says is he would withdraw from "entangling engagements." Ah! would it be safe? (No, no.)

Gentlemen, Russia and Germany and Austria, armed to the teeth and in full force, are watching each other across their frontiers, and have we no interest in the questions which are at issue there? (Cheers.) Do we not know, I ask you, that a few months of the old *laisser aller laisser faire* policy which was adopted before by Mr. Gladstone would land us in a state of things which would imperil our safety, and perhaps even put in jeopardy our very existence as a nation? (Cheers.)

Now I come to the last point I have to notice,

and it is that of finance. Mr. Gladstone says that our finances are left in confusion. Upon that point I would only ask you to contrast that speech about Conservative finance which Mr. Gladstone made in Midlothian, and then to read after it the speech which Sir Stafford Northcote made in reply—(cheers)—and I think that you would find that one is reckless, unfair, and inaccurate, and that the answer is a simple and temperate statement of facts which, without putting himself out at all, without exciting himself, as Mr. Gladstone is in the habit of doing, simply rolls and crumbles into dust the whole of the fabric which Mr. Gladstone has erected against the Government. (Loud applause.) I ask you, is it true that Mr. Gladstone is such a great financier? (No, no.) It has been the habit throughout the country to say he is the only possible financier—(a voice, "Oh, dear!" and laughter)—but I think if you will go back over the period during which he held the finances of the country, you will agree with me. I speak not now of the millions he has added to the National Debt. Not one million has been added by the Conservatives, but *eighty millions have been added by Mr. Gladstone.* I speak not now of his military organisation policy, which has cost us many millions, and of which we do not even now know what the end will be. I speak not of that, but I ask whether Mr. Gladstone, as an abstract financier, is not rated at too high a value? (Yes.) Has he

not made it more and more difficult for successive Chancellors of the Exchequer to provide for the finances of the country? (Hear, hear.) Has he not by his plan of invariably repealing small taxes whenever there was an accidental surplus, thrown us for the supplies of the State upon one or two great items of revenue, which have to bear the burdens cast upon them? (Applause.) When the small taxes existed they had become in some degree a part of the life and habits of the people, and did not bear hardly upon the nation, but now they are repealed there is no financial expedient to fall back upon, and a series of bad years, or even one bad year, means a financial deficit. I accuse Mr. Gladstone of financial incapacity for the way in which he conducted these matters.

I have not gone quite through the category of Mr. Gladstone's accusations. He says our legislation is in arrear. Now, why was Mr. Gladstone turned out of office in 1874? Why, because it was said of him, with perfect truth, that he had harassed every interest, and satisfied none. (Applause.) One of the speakers who preceded me—I think it was my noble friend on my left (Earl Manvers)—said that Mr. Lowe made a very happy speech in the early part of the recess. Mr. Lowe in that speech—I remember it well—made use of this expression: "I am," he said, "a hardened offender; the interests we have harassed before we will harass again." So now, gentlemen,

I say to you, and through you I say to the people of England, if you deliberately restore Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe to power, you know what to expect—(voices: "Matches" and "lucifer")—and you will have only yourselves to blame. (Hear, hear.) Is it true, gentlemen, that our national honour has been compromised? (No, no.) Why Lord Beaconsfield has restored the Councils of England to their proper position among those of the world. (Cheers.) When Lord Beaconsfield came into power England was of no account in Europe. Deliberately the statesmen of Europe passed her aside and passed her by. It is said of a great continental statesman, that when he heard of the cession of the Ionian Islands he made the remark—*Une nation qui commence à rendre, commence à descendre*—the nation which begins to give up territory, begins to descend. In fact, that belief was brought into actual operation, and as long as Mr. Gladstone was in office, England was put aside in the Councils of Europe. Lord Beaconsfield has restored us. (Applause.) Gentlemen, I suppose that in saying this I am talking mere jingoism. I cannot but think that that word, coined out of a homely music-hall jingle, yet confers upon us a proud title. (Cheers.) The words run—

"We don't want to fight,
But by jingo if we do."

(Loud applause.) It is true that this is only a

music-hall rhyme, a homely way of putting a homely truth; but, gentlemen, it is only saying in other words what our great Shakspeare has said in undying words—

> "Beware
> Of entrance to a quarrel: but, being in,
> Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee."

(Applause.)

Gentlemen, this series of accusations which I have recited, and to which, as far as time permits, I have endeavoured to answer—this series of accusations of Mr. Gladstone makes one ask this plain question:—If Mr. Gladstone comes in, and not Lord Beaconsfield, what will he do? ("Nothing," and applause.) I want to know. The difficulties are still there, and those difficulties stare us in the face. Will Mr. Gladstone face them manfully, or will he truckle under them? He says he dislikes the policy of resistance, and the question then becomes—Do you, the people of England, like the policy of humiliation? If you do not, gentlemen, the issue is with you. (Applause.) Sooner or later the day of election will come. You have around you the good men and true who will fight your battle. (Applause.) They are ready to fight with you for the common cause which we all have at heart. Take your measures by previous organisation, and by firm and timely preparation, to place at the head of the poll those

who will represent you in the new Parliament, and who will be trusty followers of the great statesmen to whom the reverend gentleman at the end of the table alluded in the early part of the evening. (Loud and continued cheering.)

Porteous and Gibbs, Printers, Dublin.

THE POLICY

OF

THE GOVERNMENT

SINCE THE

GENERAL ELECTION:

A SPEECH

DELIVERED TO HIS CONSTITUENTS IN THE TOWN HALL, BIRMINGHAM,

On TUESDAY, JUNE 7th, 1881,

BY THE

RT. HON. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.,

(PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE.)

[*REVISED.*]

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First Annual Report (Leeds Meeting, 1879).

Second do. do. (Darlington Meeting, 1880).

Third do. do. (Birmingham Meeting, 1881).

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MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S SPEECH

ON

THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT

SINCE THE GENERAL ELECTION.

DELIVERED IN THE BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, who was received with loud and continued applause, said: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen,—I hope I may take the friendly welcome which you have just extended to me as a proof that you share the pleasure which I undoubtedly feel in being once more permitted to address you. (Applause.) I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without saying how deeply sensible I am of the consideration which you have shown, both for the pressure of work, and also for the occasional reserve which is imposed upon men in office, and which has induced you to dispense with those frequent meetings which have hitherto been a feature in the relations between your representatives and yourselves. But I can truly assure you that I am glad once more to meet you face to face. (Applause.) Much has happened since that general election in which you took no inconsiderable part, and I have been naturally anxious for an opportunity of submitting to you the proceedings in which I have since borne a share, and of asking upon them your judgment and your opinion. And therefore I have come down to you from the very thick of the battle which has been waged, almost without cessation, since this Government took office —not without hope, based on the experience of the past, on difficulties overcome, and on dangers surmounted—and not without anxiety and even alarm when I contemplate the future, which is still dark with many clouds. But I hope, gentlemen, that I may be fortunate enough to take back with me the assurance of your

continued sympathy and support—(loud cheers)—withoutwhich, I can assure you, public life would be only a barren and thankless task.

Now, there was one result of the general election which I neither foresaw nor predicted, and that was that I should be called upon to take part in the Government which was renderedpossible by the victory which you helped to achieve. (Applause.) I accepted the office which Mr. Gladstone graciously offered me—(cheers)—not without some hesitation both because I naturally distrusted my own qualifications after so short an experience of Parliamentary life, and also because I could not surrender without regret that full independence which I had enjoyed as a private member. If I had been alone concerned in the matter, it would have been a small question; but I felt that when a member of Parliament takes office, his constituents also are called upon to share the sacrifice which he makes in this respect. A Liberal Government which pretends to represent the Liberal party must of necessity consist of men of different shades of opinion. They are all animated by the same principles, they are all going in the same direction, but the order of progress and the rate of progress, and even the instruments and means by which progress is to be accomplished, are capable of infinite variety; and no man has any right to expect, under such circumstances, that he will always be able to have his own way. Everyone must be prepared to make some concessions, and all must be ready—so much I have learnt in my experience in Birmingham—to accept and to endeavour to carry out the will of the majority when it is expressed after fair discussion. But although I state this as an element and a condition of all governments—although without this no union and association is ever possible—I venture to add that in Mr. Gladstone's Ministry I believe you have a Government which has been more united upon the main principles which should dictate its action than any Government before them, confronted with questions of equal magnitude and equal complexity. (Applause.) And I am here to assert that, speaking generally—because I do not stand upon isolated acts or upon particular decisions—but I say that speaking

generally, we have maintained the views which we expressed when we were in Opposition—the views which received the assent of an overwhelming majority of the nation. The Liberal party was returned to power because the country was disgusted and alarmed at the policy of reckless adventure which was pursued by the late Administration. Since that time twelve months have passed, and neither we nor they have changed. In the latest speeches of the responsible leaders of the Opposition you find that the same spirit lives in them, that they have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing in adversity, and that they are, even in penance, planning sins again. (Laughter.) They criticise, as they are entitled to do, the acts of the present Ministry in severe terms, but it is evident that if they were to take our places they have nothing to offer as an alternative to the policy they condemn—(cheers)—but the old policy, which has been discredited by the country—the policy of secret agreements and open aggression—the policy which embarrassed the finances of the empire, which harassed our trade and our industry, and which threatened to involve us any day in calamity and disaster. I am glad to think that the issue can be so plainly stated as it has been recently by Lord Salisbury in the speeches which he has delivered. It is true that what he has said has been subsequetly in a slight degree modified by the gloss which Sir Stafford Northcote has attempted to put upon it. But then Sir Stafford Northcote is retained for this purpose. (Loud laughter and applause.) It is his business to reassure the timid and to minimise the truculent declarations of other leaders of his party, and he reminds me of the description which was given of Madame Blaize in Goldsmith's poem—

> "She strove the neighbourhood to please
> With manners wondrous winning,
> She never followed wicked ways—
> Except when she was sinning."

(Laughter and applause.) We have, however, to bear in mind that after all it is Lord Salisbury, and not Sir Stafford Northcote, who

dictates the policy of the Conservative party—(hear, hear)—and I am here to-night to ask whether, since the general election, when you pronounced your decision upon matters which were submitted to you, you have changed your mind. (Cries of "No, no") Do you want the Tories back again? (No, no.) Are you willing once more to relegate to a distant future all prospect of domestic reform in order to enter again upon a policy of meddlesome interference and wanton aggression? (No.) I hardly expected that you would have changed your opinion after so short a time, and if you have not, then let us consider together, if you will have patience with me—let us consider together what progress has been made in an opposite direction. If we have not been so successful as you and I would have desired, that is partly because we have inherited a situation which we did not make for ourselves. (Hear, hear.) I sometimes regret that we could not have done what is so frequently done in the case of the transfer of a business from one firm to another, and that we could not have left the late firm to pay its own debts and wind up its own law suits—(laughter and applause)—and to leave us free to start on a new enterprise. Just consider if that had been possible, what would be the state of the account now. The Tories would be debited with the war in Afghanistan, and the extra 1d. in the income tax which that war and the other obligations which they contracted have involved. They would have to accept the consequences of their annexation of the Transvaal, as well as to pay the balance of the cost of the Zulu War, they would have had to answer for the acquisition of Cyprus—(oh, oh)—with its permanent deficit, and with all the unrest and disquiet which has been produced in Europe in consequence. They would have had to carry out as best they might the provisions of the Berlin Treaty, and they would have had, in a large measure at all events, to share with us the responsibility of the situation in Ireland, which is partly due to their neglect of all remedial legislation—(hear, hear)—at a time when moderate measures would have prevented the troubles in which we now find ourselves involved. (Applause.) And then, while they were employed in thus liqui-

dating their estate—and indeed I think they would have found it difficult to pay 20s. in the pound—our hands would have been free to carry on those great remedial measures which are required almost as much by the people of England and Scotland—(hear, hear)—as they are desired and claimed by the people of Ireland. (Hear, hear.) Unfortunately no such division of labour has been possible. The first duty which was imposed upon the Government by the mandate of the constituencies was to set in order, as far as that might be possible, the affairs which the Conservatives had left in such admired confusion. (Laughter.) We have made some progress, I venture to think, and with regard to that portion of the work which we have completed the silence of our opponents is the best testimony of our success, and it is also the best augury for the future. You know at the last general election what the Tories relied upon—their success in administering foreign affairs. (Laughter.) It was admitted that we Liberals might perhaps be good at the drudgery of domestic administration, but it was said that if we undertook the conduct of the Imperial relations with other countries we should infallibly bring about war, calamity, and disaster. Well, what has actually happened? The concert of Europe, which our opponents have constantly ridiculed as impossible, has been maintained, and it has been powerful enough to effect the settlement of the difficult and irritating questions which at one time threatened a renewal of the war in the East. And during the negotiations at Constantinople which Mr. Goschen—(loud applause)—has carried to a successful conclusion, with an ability, and skill, and patience, and courage which have secured for him the applause of the House of Commons and the gratitude of his countrymen. England took the lead; and the influence of England, which forsooth was to be destroyed when a Liberal Government came into power, never stood higher in Europe than it is at the present moment. (Applause.) Not because we have asserted any predominant interest in this question, not because we have put forward any pretensions to dictate to the Powers of Europe, but because it has been recognised that we have been frankly and honestly seeking,

not our selfish ambition, but the common good of all and the peace and prosperity of Europe. (Applause.) Well, now I claim that this, at all events, is the fulfilment of one of the pledges which Mr. Gladstone gave—(applause)—before the general election; and I ask you to observe that if that election had resulted differently it is not conceivable that the Montenegrin question and that the Greek question could have been settled without war by those who have always derided and held to be impossible any union of the Powers for common objects—by those who have protested against any pressure on the Sultan, and especially against the naval demonstration, who have sneered at the claims of Greece, and who, while pretending to protect Turkey from the possibility of partition, were so eager to take their share in the spoil that they did not hesitate to suggest to other nations that they might pick out each their own piece of the plunder—(applause)—provided that they would wink at our proceedings.

I do not think I need detain you at any length with regard to the action of the Government in Afghanistan. (A voice, "Candahar.") The account of our proceedings in that country constitutes the darkest chapter in the history of our Indian Empire. (Applause.) It is a chapter which will tell future generations how we entered upon a course of wanton aggression in order to obtain a scientific frontier—(laughter)—it will tell how British statesmen were instructed to create a pretext for the invasion of a free and friendly State; and I think God that that chapter, at all events, has been closed—("hear, hear," and applause)—and I hope that it may never be continued. (Hear, hear.) But here, also, I ask you in passing to bear in mind that we learn from the action and from the speeches of the Conservative Opposition that if they had remained in power they would have continued in the same baneful course—they would have maintained the occupation of Candahar in spite of its injustice, in spite of the expense and the responsibility—and they would have done this, though it was certain to have involved us in almost permanent hostility with the Afghan people.

But I pass on to consider graver and more critical questions—

questions which are still pending, and upon which, indeed, I cannot even now make a full exposition of our policy, although I think I may state enough to show the general principles by which we have been actuated, and to challenge your judgment upon them. (Hear, hear.) I want to speak to you on the question of Ireland—(loud cheers)—but I will reserve what I have to say for a few minutes while I ask your attention, in the first place, to the settlement which we have recently made of the unfortunate war in the Transvaal. (Hear, hear.) This settlement has been the object of violent attack in the House of Peers. You have been told that it constitutes a dismemberment of the empire ; that it is a national surrender, you have been told for the hundreth time that it has destroyed the prestige of England, and that it has caused Earl Cairns to blush, who never blushed before. (Laughter and applause). Well, sir, these are terrible calamities, especially the last—(laughter)—but before we consider how far these accusations can be sustained, let me ask you to think seriously what is the alternative which it is said we ought to have adopted. We are accused of dismembering the empire, and to avoid this, we ought in the opinion of our opponents to have maintained the annexation of the Transvaal. That annexation was made by the Conservative Government upon two distinct assurances. They declared, in the first place, upon information which was supplied to them, that the majority of the white inhabitants of the Transvaal desired the transfer, and they declared that unless it were effected we should infallibly be involved in a native war, which would endanger our South African possession. Well, you all know that after that transfer was effected we found ourselves, in spite of it, immediately involved in two native wars—one with Cetewayo and the Zulu people, and the other with Secocoeni; and you know and they know now if they did not know before, that the great majority of the Boer inhabitants of the Transvaal are bitterly hostile to the English rule—(hear, hear)—and yet we are told that we ought to have persevered in wrong-doing, after it was proved that the two grounds upon which the annexation was defended were fallacious, and rested on no solid foundation—that we should still force our

rule on an unwilling people, whose independence we had solemnly engaged by treaty to respect. (Applause.) And this we were to do in order to spare Lord Cairns the unwonted blush with which he graced his peroration and alarmed his brother peers. (Laughter.) I will not at this moment stop to question the morality of such a step as that, but I want you to think for a moment of the expediency of it, of the wisdom of those statesmen who recommend such a course to her Majesty's Government. It has been proved to us that the Boers are at all events brave soldiers—(hear, hear)—that they are skilled in the use of arms—(hear, hear)—that they are physically, at least, a match even for English soldiers. The Transvaal is a country as large as France—a wild and difficult country—and it is perfectly evident to everyone that if we are to hold it down by force we must permanently maintain, a number of troops at least equal to the number of our possible opponents. Well, we know also that the Orange Free State, which is a neighbouring territory would make common cause with their co-religionists and men of the same nationality in the Transvaal; and therefore I say that it is perfectly certain that not less than from 15,000 to 20,000 English troops must be permanently stationed there if we are to hold that country by force and against the will of the inhabitants. And to what end are we to do this? To prevent the dismemberment of the Empire. Why, the annexation was only reluctantly accepted by Lord Carnarvon three years ago. The territory has only been in our hands for a short three years, and it came into our possession upon information which we now know to be incorrect. And if we let them go, this population of 40,000—a population less than that contained in any one of the sixteen wards of this town in which I am speaking—why this dismembered Empire of ours will still contain 250,000,000 of subjects to the Queen, to rule whom well and wisely is a duty and a responsibility which I think is sufficient even for the wildest ambition.

Well, but we are told that there is another course which has recommended itself to some of our critics, and that is that we should have used the overwhelming forces which we placed at the disposal of Sir Evelyn Wood in order

to attack the Boers, and that then, after we had defeated them in a bloody encounter—military honour being satisfied—we might have retired from the Transvaal, which we should have rendered desolate by the slaughter of many of its brave defenders. (Hear, hear.) Before such a recommendation as that should commend itself to your minds, and to mine, let us consider for a moment what sort of people these are whom we are asked to treat in this revengeful way. The Boers are not naturally a warlike race. They are a homely, industrious, but somewhat rude and uncivilised nation of farmers, living on the produce of the soil. They are animated by a deep and even stern religious sentiment, and they inherit from their ancestors—the men who won the independence of Holland from the oppressive rule of Philip II. of Spain—they inherit from them their unconquerable love of freedom and of liberty. Are not these qualities which commend themselves to men of the English race? (Applause.) Are they not virtues which we are proud to believe form the best characteristics of the English people? Is it against such a nation that we are to be called upon to exercise the dread arbitrament of arms? These men settled in the Transvaal in order to escape foreign rule. They had had many quarrels with the British. They left their homes in Natal as the English Puritans left England and went to the United States, and they founded a little Republic of their own in the heart of Africa; in 1852 we made a treaty with them; they agreed to give up slavery, which had hitherto prevailed in their midst, and we agreed to respect and to guarantee their independence; and I say under these circumstances, is it possible we could maintain a forcible annexation of the country without incurring the accusation of having been guilty, I will not say of national folly, but I say of national crime? (Applause.) That was the way in which the matter was understood by the late Government, who were not particularly scrupulous about these matters, but they distinctly instructed Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who was their representative in South Africa, not to take over the Transvaal unless he was satisfied that the majority of the people wished for the change. He did satisfy himself, as we know now, upon insufficient and inaccu-

rate information. The annexation was submitted to Parliament, and I am glad to think that on that occasion I was one of the small minority who voted against the proceeding. (Applause.) At the same time, I will frankly admit, there were very strong arguments indeed to justify the majority in the course which they took—arguments based upon the assurances which were given to us by the Government. That was in 1877. Shortly afterwards the Zulu war broke out and the Boers remained quiet. I daresay they were not unnaturally very well satisfied to see the English doing their work for them, fighting and destroying their former enemies. At all events, they contented themselves with protests, and memorials, and deputations to this country. The late Government rejected their petitions, and refused to reconsider the question of annexation and so matters stood when we came into office. About that time we were all agreed—there was no difference of opinion—that the original annexation was a mistake, that it ought never to have been made—(hear, hear)—and then there arose the question, could it then be undone? It is very easy to do evil; it is not so easy to escape the consequences of it—(applause)—or to put things back again in the same position in which they would have been if they had never been disturbed. We were in possession of information to the effect that the great majority of the people of the Transvaal were reconciled to annexation. We were told that if we reversed the decision of the late Government there was a great probability of civil war and anarchy, and, acting upon these representations, we decided that we could not recommend the Queen to relinquish her sovereignty, but we assured the Boers that we would take the earliest opportunity of granting to them the freest and the most complete local institutions which might be found compatible with the welfare of South Africa. You know it is not difficult to be wise after the event. It is not difficult to see now that we did wrong in so deciding. I frankly admit that we made a mistake. I say that whatever the risk was—and I believe it was a great one—of civil war or anarchy in the Transvaal, if we had reversed the decision, it was not so great a danger as that which we actually incured by maintaining the wrong doing of our predecessors. But let me show

you what was the kind of information upon which we acted. We received despatches to the same effect, which were continued almost to the actual outbreak of hostilities. We received a despatch, dated November 19th, 1880, from Sir Owen Lanyon, who was administrating the Transvaal, in which he said "three-fourths of the population are secretly in favour of annexation. The action of a few agitators must not be taken to be the opinion of the country, and there is not much, if any, cause for anxiety in the state of affairs." In a despatch, dated December 5th, he repeated similar sentiments. On December 16th, barely ten days later, the Boers broke out into open insurrection. They established a provisional government, and they hoisted the old flag of the Republic at Heidelburg. Well, there was then, at all events, no longer the possibility of a doubt as to the state of affairs. It was perfectly evident under those altered conditions that we should have to make new arrangements ; but at the same time it was necessary that we should be in a position to take guarantees, in the first place, for the safety of loyal settlers, if there were any such, in the Transvaal ; in the second place for the good treatment of the native population who had accepted our rule ; and, in the third place, against the recurrence of quarrels with native tribes across the borders, which might lead to difficulties in South Africa. And therefore we hurried forward reinforcements with such speed that, when later on the conditions of peace were arranged by Sir Evelyn Wood, he had under his command something like 12,000 troops—more than the total adult male population of the whole of the Boers in the Transvaal. Now just let me say in passing a word about Sir Evelyn Wood. He is known to you, he is known to every Englishman as one of the bravest soldiers, as one of the most skilful commanders in the British service. (Applause.) But I say that in my humble judgment he has earned a higher title to admiration and to the respect of his fellow-countrymen by his loyalty in carrying out satisfactory terms of settlement, by resisting the temptation which might well be strong to a soldier of using his overwhelming force in order to revenge a military disaster, than he would have done if he had won the

greatest victory, or had entered the Transvaal in triumph over the dead bodies of its slain. (Applause.)

While then, the Government were preparing for every event, we did not think that we were justified—and it is for you to say how far you agree with us—we did not think we were justified in closing the door to a peaceful settlement. (Hear, hear.) The overtures for this settlement came in the first instance from President Brand, a man who is deserving of the hearty recognition of every friend of peace. (Applause.) He is the President of the Orange Free State. He has done his best to prevent his fellow countrymen from going into the war, and to put a stop to the unnecessary effusion of blood. And in the second place, overtures came from the Boer leaders. Mr. Kruger, their Vice-president, wrote to Sir George Colley to say that he was confident of the justice of his cause ; and he was so certain that the English people, if they only knew the true facts, would do him right, that he was willing to submit the case to a Royal Commission, to be appointed by the Queen. Well, sir, we thought that those were terms which ought to be accepted—(Applause)—and we instructed Sir George Colley, if certain conditions could be obtained, to arrange for a settlement upon that basis. Among the conditions, the first and most important was that the Boers should desist from armed opposition. But while the correspondence was going on, in the midst of the negotiations, unfortunately, on three several occasions, the British troops marching in inferior numbers to attack the strong position of the Boers, met with a repulse. Those events were deplored by us, as they must be by everyone, but they did not seem to us to constitute a reason why we should withdraw the offer which we had previously made. (Applause.) In those attacks we were the aggressors—not the Boers—and our losses, greatly as we grieve for them, did not make the original cause of war more just; they did not make the prolongation of this miserable and inglorious struggle more desirable and expedient. (Hear, hear.) And therefore, when Sir Evelyn Wood, acting on his own responsibility, arranged for an armistice, we approved his proceedings. (Applause.) And when the terms of peace were arranged, when the Boers accepted our offer, as we had originally

made it, we rejoiced in the prospect of a settlement without further effusion of blood, whether of Englishmen or Dutchmen—(applause)—and we did not think the English people would feel themselves to be humiliated because their Government had refused knowingly to persist in a course of oppression and wrong-doing, and because we had accepted, without a victory, terms which were the best we could reasonably expect that even the greatest victory would give to us. (Applause.) We are a great and powerful nation. What is the use of being great and powerful if we are afraid to admit an error when we are conscious of it? (Applause.) Shame is not in the confession of a mistake. Shame lies only in persistency in wilful wrong-doing. (Hear, hear.) And if Earl Cairns likes to sit in sackcloth and ashes—if he likes, in well-feigned abasement, to expiate the folly of the Administration of which he was a member in the hasty annexation which has led to all these trials—in Heaven's name let him have that gratification. (Cheers.) But when he dares to say that the English nation is shamed by the course we have taken, I deny him the right to be judge in such a cause, and I appeal to the impartial public opinion of Europe and of America, which has approved of the action of the Government in preferring justice to revenge—(cheers)—and the best interests of South Africa to the vain pursuit of military glory. (Cheers.)

Sir, I now approach the last subject upon which I shall venture to address you. In referring to the state of Ireland I do so under the gravest sense of the responsibility attaching to any-one who touches upon such a theme. At this moment an excitable people, suffering under the sense of long-continued injustice and wrong—(hear, hear)—only lately coming out of great tribulation, having endured hardship unexampled and extraordinary privation, having barely escaped starvation in consequence of the extraordinary efforts of public charity—these people, with such a character and under such conditions, are being encouraged by leaders in whom they have placed their confidence—(hear, hear)—to defy what they believe to be an unjust law—(cheers)—and to seek by disorder, and even by violence, to redress their grievances. Under these circumstances, when class is set against class, when

any moment may bring about a collision which will fil all our minds with horror, no true friend of Ireland would dare to say anything which could add fuel to the flame. (Cheers.) "The condition of Ireland is desperate and critical." These are not my words; these are the words of Mr. Smith, the late First Lord of the Almiralty, in the debate on the second reading of the Land Bill. Mr. Smith went on to say that this condition of things was the fault of the Government, who had delayed too long, and had been reluctant in applying for extraordinary powers, and who, when they obtained them, had been weak and languid in enforcing them. Well, that is an hypothesis which might have some weight, to which some importance might be attached, if it were not unfortunately the case that the state of Ireland, desperate and critical as it is, is not exceptional. The state of Ireland during the last half century has been one of almost chronic disorder. Here you have a people who, by consent of friend and foe, are remarkable in ordinary times for their obedience to the ordinary law—(hear, hear)—a people whose history is signalised by a singular and admirable absence of ordinary crime, and yet you have them from time to time breaking out into paroxysms of agrarian violence and disorder. Under these circumstances it is perfectly evident, I think, to every right-thinking man that the causes of this disorder are more deep-seated than Mr. Smith chooses to suppose, and that they are not to be found solely in the action of this or of any previous Government. They are to be found in the condition of the people themselves, and we must cut deep if we want to get at the bottom of the matter. In past times English statesmen, unfortunately, have only had one way of dealing with what they call Irish disaffection. They have applied coercion quickly enough, and they have applied it stringently enough to satisfy even the Tories; and it cannot be said of them, at all events, that the restrictive measures which they have adopted have been languidly enforced. We have had, I have read somewhere, fifty Coercion Acts—Acts of repression in Ireland since 1830. (Shame.) That is one for every year in the half century which has elapsed since that date. Well, what has been the result? Ireland is still discontented. Ireland is still suffering

from periodical fits of disorder. Now, I want to call your attention to one illustration of past policy in reference to this matter. In 1831 there was an outbreak of disorder which in many respects is very similar to the one which we are now witnessing. It was a strike by the Irish people against the payment of tithes, and is known in history as the tithe war; and when it broke out the Government took the usual steps—they passed Whiteboy Acts, they passed an Arms Act, they passed the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; but in spite of this action on the part of the English Government, outrages, and secret outrages especially, still continued, and in 1833—two years after the disturbances first broke out—Lord Stanley, who is better known as the late Earl of Derby, but who was then Chief Secretary for Ireland in the House of Commons, told the House of Commons that "the record of crime in Ireland almost surpasses belief." In one county—the county of Kilkenny—there were 32 murders and attempts at murder, 34 burnings of houses, 178 assaults with danger to life, 519 burglaries, and 34 houghings of cattle. Bad as is the state of things which we now recognise in Ireland, it is nothing like so bad as things were in 1833. But why have I laid before you this statement of what happened so long ago? It is because I think that this experience and much which has happened since is a proof of the truth of the maxim which Mr. Bright laid down in this hall—(cheers)—some months ago, and which has been much questioned since, and which says that force is no remedy. (Applause.) Mind, that does not say that force may not be necessary — (hear, hear)— but it is no remedy. If a man is ill — if he suffers from fever, and becomes delirious, his friends may properly put a straight waistcoat on him to prevent him from injuring himself and those around him. (Applause.) But if in doing this they said that they thought it to be a cure and a specific for the fever, they would be considered by all of us to be out of their senses. The Government of a free country is bound to take every step, every means in its power, in order to secure obedience to the law. (Loud cheers.) The law is the safeguard of the liberty of every one of us. (Cheers.) The law means the protection of

the weak against the strong, and if any class sets itself above the law, and if a Government should abet them in doing so, then I say there would be an end of all the constitutional guarantees of our personal liberties. (Applause.) On the other hand, the Government—any Government—is bound to do its best to alter and amend the law where it thinks it to be unjust. ("Hear, hear," and applause.) These are two duties of a Government which run together, and which cannot be separated. The late Lord Beaconsfield, when he was Mr. Disraeli, and was addressing himself to a somewhat similar subject, said one of the wisest things which, I believe, he ever spoke. He described to the House of Commons the then condition of Ireland, and he wound up by saying, "What should be the duty, under these circumstances, of an English statesman? Your duty is to effect by peaceful and constitutional means all that a revolution would effect by force." ("Hear hear," and applause.) Well, sir, that was precisely what Mr. Gladstone attempted to do by the Land Act of 1870. That Act, as we all know, was not a complete success. Its partial failure was due to two things. It was due, in the first place, to the action of the House of Lords, who on this, as on so many other previous occasions, mutilated and destroyed the effect of bills sent up to it from the Lower House, and it was partly due to the action of some of the landlords of Ireland, who unwisely endeavoured to escape from the conditions of the Act—conditions which might have enabled them to establish on a firm and friendly footing their relations with their tenants, and who by slow degrees raised the rents upon the holders of land until the burden became too great to be borne. Between 1870 and 1876 there was over a large part of Ireland a great rise in rents. This took place, not in jumps, but in small gradual advances, no single one of which the tenant felt himself justified in refusing, although the effect of the whole of them together was that, although he could just pay his way in good times, when the bad seasons came he was ruined hopelessly, and had to leave and give up his means of livelihood. Well now, these facts were laid before Parliament from time to time. Unfortunately they could not secure either the attention of the last

Parliament or the attention of the Government. I have seen it stated in a pamphlet written by an Irishman of some note and weight, that if in 1875 the then Government had brought in a bill to protect the tenants against the exaction of unfair rents, there would have been no agitation and no trouble whatever in Ireland. (Applause.) Unfortunately they did nothing, and I am sorry to say it has been only too often the case in Irish affairs that we have attempted to redress grievances after too long a delay, and we have had to pay an increasing penalty every day that we have postponed our necessary action. Well, now, after this there came the recent famine. The Government made large grants of money in aid of the Irish people, grants which, I am afraid, in a great number of cases never reached the sufferers for whom they were intended; but they refused absolutely to do anything towards amending the law. Under these circumstances it was that the Land League was first formed. ("Hear, hear," and applause.) It was started in the last years of the late Government, and from that day Irish discontent has assumed an organised form. Then, we took office; we took office pledged by the declarations of almost every member of the Ministry, by our avowed sympathies, by our known convictions, to do our very best at the earliest possible moment to seek out the cause, the deep underlying cause, of Irish disaffection, and, if possible, to remove it by legislation. (Applause.) Events moved too quickly for us. Before we were well seated in office, before we had obtained the report of the Commissioners whom we appointed to examine into this matter, we were called upon to deal with one phase of the Irish difficulty. Well, we did not hesitate. We sacrificed all our pre-conceived plans and schemes, we gave up the programme which we had recommended to Parliament; we stopped, we delayed proceeding with English and Scotch business, and we introduced a bill, the Compensation for Disturbance Bill—(applause)—which occupied many weeks of time, and which, as you know, led to a very protracted session. You will recollect the solemn warning which Mr. Gladstone, in urging the acceptance of that bill upon the House of Commons, addressed to us in reference to the state of affairs. He said, "Ireland stands within measur-

able distance of civil war," and he urged that this bill should be accepted as, in the opinion of the Government, necessary to strengthen their hands, and to enable them to secure obedience to law and order. The warning was neglected—the House of Lords —(hisses)—rejected the bill—(shame)—and I say, never in the history of that House has it committed a more unwise and a more unpatriotic act. (Applause.) If that bill had been passed we have the assurance of the leaders of the Irish Land League themselves that they could not have successfully continued their agitation. The bill was rejected, and civil war has begun. Class is arrayed against class in social strife, and now 30,000 soldiers and 12,000 policemen are barely sufficient to enable the Government to protect the lives and the property of the Queen's subjects in Ireland. Well, it is said sometimes that we ought to have had another session of Parliament, and that the bill should have been sent up again to the Lords. Our critics seem to forget that we are not a despotic Government, and that we have not the power to do what we will. We can only act within the limits of the constitution, and if we had called another session of Parliament, and if we had sent up the bill to the House of Lords, inasmuch as we were only able to secure a comparatively small majority in its favour in the House of Commons on the first occasion, I believe it is probable that the bill would have been again rejected. It is said we might have dissolved Parliament; but if you consider that we had only had a general election a few months before, and the effect of such a proposal at a time when Ireland was seething with disaffection, I think you will feel that it is one which no reasonable man would make, and which no prudent Government would be able seriously to consider.

What is to be done now? (Applause.) Well, the Tories have no doubt whatever as to the course which we ought to pursue. By the mouths of their leaders, by their organs in the press, they urge upon the Government to put aside at once the Land Bill, to give up any attempt at remedial legislation, and to go to Parliament for more and more coercion, for the abolition of trial by jury, for the suppression of the Land League, and for other stringent and arbitrary

measures. Well now, for my part I hate coercion. (Applause.) I hate the name and I hate the thing. (Renewed applause.) I am bound to say that I believe there is not one of my colleagues who does not hate it as I do. But then we hate disorder more. (Cheers.) It seems to me that the issue is now with the Irish people and those who lead them. They can have no doubt any longer. It might have been possible before; they can have no doubt any longer as to the intentions of the Government. We have brought in a Land Bill. (Prolonged applause.) We have offered our message of peace to the Irish people. It is a bill, indeed, which Lord Salisbury professes that he cannot understand; but I don't find that his want of intelligence has prevented him from denouncing it in the strongest terms. It is a bill which Sir Stafford Northcote appears to consider of no importance, for he urges the Government to give to the House of Commons some proposals of really serious legislation which would justify the absence of obstructive proceedings. But this bill which Lord Salisbury cannot understand—this bill which Sir Stafford Northcote thinks to be of no importance has been, I am glad to say, accepted generally as to its main principles, in the spirit in which it has been conceived, by all that is most reasonable and intelligent amongst the Irish people. (Applause.) I do not say that it may not be susceptible of amendment, but I say that, as it stands, and, speaking generally of its main provisions, that it has been welcomed by the majority of the Irish press. It has been frankly accepted as satisfactory by the whole of Ulster. It has been approved—I am always speaking of its main proposals—it has been approved by the Roman Catholic clergy, and let me say, in passing, that although there have been of course some exceptions, I think the action of the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland during these disturbances has been on the whole worthy of their cloth—(applause)—and of their religion, and that the influence to which their sympathies with the people justly entitle them has been exercised on the whole on the side of law and order. Well, sir, this bill, as I say, has been accepted in its main provisions by the Roman Catholic clergy. It has been accepted by the representatives of Ireland. Out of 101 of them,

only seven were found to vote against the second reading of the bill, and of those seven, three, I believe were members of the late Government. This Bill has been accepted as, at all events, a basis of a satisfactory settlement. We have pledged ourselves to do everything which lies within our power to carry it to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion. We have staked our existence upon it. (Loud cheers.) There is no possibility of retreat. And now, just let me tell you in a few words what this bill which Lord Salisbury cannot understand really is. I fancy that the intelligence of Birmingham working men will at least be equal to a demand which has proved too great a strain on Lord Salisbury's attention. (Laughter.) This is a bill which provides, in the first place, for an impartial tribunal, to which every small tenant in Ireland can go in order to fix a fair rent between himself and his landlord if they should happen to disagree. This bill permits every small tenant to sell his goodwill or tenant-right for the best price he can get for it, if he wishes to exchange or leave his holding; and in this way it secures him absolutely in all the improvements which he may make upon the land. It gives to him also security of tenure in his holding, provided he fulfils the reasonable requirements and conditions of the tenancy. And, in addition to that, it affords facilities greater than have ever been suggested before, whereby many of these tenants, at all events, will be able on reasonable and moderate terms to acquire full possession of the land which they now till as occupying tenants. (Applause.) A few weeks, or at most a month or two, must settle the fate of the Government and the fate of this measure. May we not call a truce, under these circumstances, in the bitter civil war, which, as I have said, is going on? I appeal to the landlords first, who have in many cases been very long-suffering and patient, to have yet a little more forbearance with their tenants, at all events during the time which must intervene before their relations with them are finally settled. I hope, also, that I may venture to appeal to the Irish people. (Applause.) I appeal to them as I appealed to them, I am sorry to say without success, before—I appeal to them not to play into the hands of their enemies. (Cheers.) I appeal to them not to make

the policy of conciliation difficult or even impossible for us by acts of violence and disorder which every honest man condemns. (Applause.) I believe that if we could tide over this intervening time, or if we could by sone magic power secure the immediate passage of this bill, that we should have a settlement of this disastrous state of things. The Tories say that it would not be a final settlement. Well, perhaps not. There is no finality in politics—(applause)—and every generation in turn must solve its own problems, and carry forward to a successful issue its own reforms. (Applause.) But at least we should have done our duty —at least we should have dealt with the question of the moment, and until some new grievance might arise to be dealt with, with equal justice, and I hope with greater promptitude—until such time, at least, we should have established the relations of the Irish people on a satisfactory footing.

Sir, I am afraid there are two parties who do not want a settlement of this question—(applause)—and those are the Tories and the leaders of the Land League. (Applause.) Since the Easter holidays every day of Government time has been given, without intermission, in order to promote the progress of this great and vitally important measure, and yet, up to the present day only six lines of the bill, which consists of over a thousand lines, have passed through Committee. There are some people who think that the time may shortly come when a review of the position and functions of the House of Lords may not be an inappropriate subject for the consideration of the English people—(applause)—but I venture to say that the urgent question of the moment, the point to which every reformer should now direct his first attention, is the reform of the procedure of the House of Commons. The House of Commons has ceased to be able to represent or give effect to the will of the majority of the nation. It has sunk into a great debating society, without power to come to a decision, or to register and carry out the mandate which it has received from the constituencies. And while discussion is prolonged in the House of Commons the gloom of the situation in Ireland extends and deepens. Our talk never slackens: neither does the agitation in Ireland.

And I am sometimes afraid lest even this great measure of reform may come too late, and provisions which would be satisfactory, which would be gratefully accepted, if they could be immediately accorded, may yet be rejected if they are indefinitely postponed.

Now, why is it this important decision is so long delayed? In the first place the Government has to deal with the ill-concealed—I might almost say the avowed—hostility of a certain section of the leaders of the Irish party. There is no secret about what I am going to say. There is no dispute about it. Mr. Parnell and those who follow him have never concealed the fact that their chief object is not the removal of grievances in Ireland, but the separation of Ireland from England. (Hear, hear.) Why only a few months ago, Mr. Parnell, speaking in Ireland, said that he would never have joined the Land League, he would have taken no part in this great agitation which has been called into existence to redeem the Irish people from the consequences of centuries of wrong, he would have taken no part in that agitation if he had not thought it would have helped him in the Nationalist and Separatist movement in which he chiefly takes an interest. How can we satisfy these men? Our object is not the same as theirs; we want to remove every just cause of grievance. They want to magnify grievances and to intensify differences. We want to unite the Irish people and the English and the Scotch in bonds of amity. We want, I say, to bind the Irish people to this country in bonds of amity and cordial union—(hear, hear)—just as much as Scotland is united to England, although the time was when Scotchmen felt as bitter a hostility to the union as Irishmen now profess to feel. Well, under these circumstances, I find that the gentlemen to whom I have referred do not openly oppose the Land Bill, because, I believe, they are well aware that their constituents would not justify them in such a course. (Hear, hear.) But they are not unwilling to put obstacles in its way. They are not unwilling to raise motions for adjournment or to put questions which lead to debate, and which take up the precious time of the House, which ought to be expended solely in the promotion of this measure; and, above all, they try by agitation to force upon the Government impos-

sible concessions—(hear, hear)—the effect of which, if only we were to accept them, they know would be that the bill would very likely be rejected by the House of Commons, and would certainly be rejected by the House of Peers. Now, I observe, at a meeting which was held on Sunday last, in Hyde Park, Mr. Parnell made a suggestion that the Government should refuse in the future to allow the soldiery or police in Ireland to be employed in the protection of the officers who are carrying out the law. I do not think that Mr. Parnell himself sees exactly the whole of the fatal consequences which would follow the adoption of such a suggestion. Let us see what it amounts to? It amounts to this—that any Government which thinks a law unjust should at once set itself above the law, and should refuse to allow that law to be put in force. (Hear, hear.) What is it which gives security to all of us? What is it which enables every one of you—the humblest among you—to feel that your homes are protected from violence, and that the persons and lives of those who are dear to you are safe from outrages? Why, it is the sense that you have the support and assistance of the law, so long as you obey the law. (Loud applause.) And it is the sense that behind the law there is all the force of a mighty empire, all the power that the strongest Government can wield. I say if you take this security from us, you take from us everything which guarantees our liberties and our freedom. It is all very well for us now to say this law is unjust. The Tory Government which follows us may think another law equally open to objection, and Government after Government will set up a separate despotism of its own, and the freedom and liberties of three kingdoms will be destroyed. (Applause.) Well, but there are other considerations also which must be weighed in this matter. An eviction may be, and in some cases it is, a harsh and oppressive act—(hear, hear)—but on the other hand it may be—no one can deny it—it may be the only way in which a landlord may be able to obtain a fair and moderate rent, upon which the livelihood of himself and family depends. I say that in such a case as I have described the landlord's rent is as much his property as your coat or your money

is yours. (Loud applause.) Mr. Parnell tells us—in the House of Commons—that the advice which he has given to Irish tenants is that they are not to pay unjust rents. (Hear, hear.) Well, there is a good deal to be said about such a proposition as that. Is every man to be judge in his own case what is just and what is unjust? I don't think even the best and most honest amongst us could be trusted in every case to pay his full debts under such circumstances as these. (Applause.) But unfortunately this is not all. Whatever Mr. Parnell may do, other leaders of the Land League in Ireland and elsewhere have advised the people not to pay any rent at all. And it is a fact that in hundreds and thousands of cases, the Irish tenants are following this baneful advice. The problem before the Government is not a small one. What we want to find out is this. We want to try how we can protect the honest tenant from the unjust procedure on the part of a cruel and harsh landlord, and we want, on the other hand, to do that so that we may not at the same time protect the dishonest tenant in his dishonesty—(hear, hear)—and help him to take advantage of this agitation to rob his creditors, refusing, with money in his pockets, to pay his landlord, who, perhaps, is poorer than himself. (Applause.)

Then the bill has also been delayed by the action of the Tories, who are striving by amendments and by discussion to force upon the Government provisions for the compensation of the landlords for what they call the confiscation of their property. I very much doubt whether these amendments are really suggested by Irish landlords, who, I believe, as a rule, are only anxious for a reasonable settlement. I am inclined to think they are suggested by English landlords, who are afraid of inconvenient precedents. (Applause.) But in any case I say that these amendments are unreasonable, and ought to be rejected. (Applause.) What have we to compensate the landlords of Ireland for? We do not propose to do anything above and beyond this—to make compulsory upon all landlords the practice which we are assured the majority of landlords, and certainly of good landlords, already adopt. Good landlords do not rack their tenants. Why should bad landlords be compensated for a legal right which they cannot equitably exercise? A good landlord will

not forfeit the property or the improvements of his tenants, and he will not lightly evict from his holding—which perhaps is the only means of livelihood which the tenant has—a man who, by himself and his family, has remained perhaps longer on the ground even than the landlord who is in authority over him; yet bad landlords have done this in some cases, and might do in many more, and I cannot conceive that they have any right to claim compensation for the restriction and limitation of powers which they ought never to have been permitted to enjoy. In our English legislation there are numberless precedents in which legal rights have been found to be in conflict with public morality and public interest, and have been restricted and limited, and I am not aware of any such cases in which compensation has been given to those who have been thus treated. Irish landlords must look for their real compensation for any sacrifice, if sacrifice it be which they are called upon to make, in the fact that it is only in some restriction of their rights that their relations with their tenants can possibly be replaced in a friendly and satisfactory condition; and as the rights of Irish landlords are now only maintained by the presence of an English garrison, and would not exist for a moment if that garrison were removed, it appears to me that the English people which maintains this garrison is entitled to a voice in settling the conditions under which the protection which they give shall continue to be afforded. (Applause.)

Well now, gentlemen, I have brought down the narrative to the present time. I cannot attempt, I will not venture to predict the future. The Government is striving to steer an even course between extremes. We have been told that the bill which we have brought in is the minimum which the Irish people can accept. I believe it is the maximum which any English Parliament will pass. We pursue the work in which we are engaged under circumstances of some discouragement. We cannot count upon, we do not ask for, the assistance of our opponents. We meet with scant consideration from those whom we are attempting to serve. I feel that I have detained you too long. (No.) I thank you most sincerely for the patience with which you have listened to me. I shall have

served some purpose if I have brought before you the difficulties by which the Government finds itself encompassed; and if I have shown you also the spirit in which we are endeavouring to overcome them. I trust also that I may have made clear to you the alternative policy which is offered by our opponents for your adoption. It is now for you to choose between us. I can only say for myself, that I have not found office so free from care and from anxiety that I am greatly desirous of its long continuance. I accepted it with hesitation; I shall resign it without reluctance. But there is one thing in connection with it which I shall never forget, and that is—that I have been permitted, for however short a time and in however humble a capacity, to be associated with the ablest and the noblest of English statesmen—(cheers)—in a policy which I believe to be just and wise in its conception, which I know to be humane and beneficent in its intention, which I firmly trust will yet be crowned with signal success, and which, I think, will be recognised by future generations as the greatest achievement of a long and splendid public life. (Loud cheers.)

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ADDRESSES

BY

MR. GLADSTONE

AND

MR. DISRAELI.

JANUARY, 1874.

MR. GLADSTONE'S ADDRISS.

TO THE ELECTORS OF GREENWICI.

Gentlemen,—Her Majesty has been advised by Hr Ministers, and has graciously accepted the advice, to dissolve the present Parliament and immediately to summon a new one, for the transaction of the regular business of the year.

In that new Parliament I respectfully solicit the honour of representing you.

I am too well aware that in the choice of a person charged as I am with official duty, you forego for the public good many special claims which you would otherwise justly make on the time and attention of your representative. This sacrifice, so freely and honourably incurred five years ago, I once again presume to ask at your hands, under the circumstances and for the special purposes which I shall now proceed to describe.

Of the House of Commons now about to be dissolved, no one will deny the remarkable amount of its labours, and of those legislative results which, but for untoward and chiefly recent circumstances, would have been greater still. I take upon me to affirm that those great labours have likewise been great services, and that they will give to the Parliament of 1868 a distinguished place in the annals of our country.

It is not to be wondered at if, after five years of anxious and varied effort, the strength both of the House of Commons and of the Administration for the concurrent discharge of their arduous duties has been impaired.

The welfare of the country can never be effectully promoted by a Government which is not invested with adequate authority.

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That authority, which was, in 1868, amply confided by the nation to the Liberal Party and its leaders, if it has not sunk below the point necessary for the due defence and prosecution of the public interests, can in no way be so legitimately and effetually restored as by an appeal to the people, who, by their reply o such an appeal, may place beyond all challenge two great quesions—the first, what they think of the manner in which the comission granted in 1868 has been executed; the second, what urther commission they now think fit to give to their representatives, and to what hands its fulfilment and the administration of the Government are to be intrusted.

I will not attempt to set out in full the causes which have convinced the Government that the time has now come for thus appealing to the country, but I will refer to such of them as embrace matters of fact rather than of opinion.

In the month of March last the Government were defeated in their effort to settle upon just and enlarged principles the long-disputed question of the higher education in Ireland, if not by a combined, yet by a concurrent, effort of the leader of the Opposition and of the Roman Catholic Prelacy of Ireland. Upon suffering this defeat, the Government, according to the practice of our Constitution, placed their resignations in the hands of the Sovereign. Her Majesty, in the just and wise exercise of her high office, applied to the leader of the opposition. He, however, declaring that he was not prepared with a policy, and could not govern in the existing Parliament, declined to fill the void which he had made. Under these circumstances, we thought ourselves bound by loyalty to the Queen not to decline the resumption of our offices. But this step we took with an avowed reluctance. We felt that, in consequence of what had happened, both the Crown and country were placed at a disadvantage, as it was established that, during the existence of the present Parliament, one party only could govern, and must, therefore, govern without appeal. We also felt that a precedent had been set, which both diminished our strength and weakened the general guarantees for the responsibility and integrity of Parliamentary opposition.

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Of this diminution of strength we were painfully and sensibly reminded during the Session by the summary and rapid dismissal, in the House of Lords, of measures which had cost much time and labour to the House of Commons.

But we remembered that in the years 1868 and 1870, when the mind of the country was unambiguously expressed, the House of Lords had, much to its honour, deferred to that expression upon matters of great moment; and I cannot doubt that it would have continued in this course, had the isolated and less certain, but still frequent and fresh, indications of public opinion at single elections continued to be in harmony with the powerful and authentic, but now more remote judgment of 1868.

This state of things, which was not satisfactory at the close of the last Session, and which has not admitted of remedy by the method of resignation and a change of Government, has not improved during the recess, especially the latter part of the recess; and the time has now arrived when the Administration, able to anticipate and survey the principal parts and the general character of the work which awaits it, has been called on to consider whether it could reasonably undertake such work without a fresh access of strength, and to frame its advice to Her Majesty accordingly.

The question whether Ministers ought to retain or to abandon office should be decided by a general election, with the opportunity which it affords for broad declarations of policy and issues truly national, and cannot be satisfactorily solved by isolated contests, or which the issue is in a greater degree dependent on close discipline and finished and concentrated organization.

From a state of things thus fitful and casual, we desire to pass to one in which the nation will have had full opportunity of expressing will and choice as between the political parties. The Government of the day, whatever it be, will be armed with its just means of authority both within and without the Legislature. The opposition will enjoy the power, and doubtless will not shrink from the duty, of taking office. The House of Commons will be reinstated in its full possession of constitutional authority, and when it shall see cause to withdraw its confidence from an Administration, it will not leave the Sovereign without resource.

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Such will be the general objects, then, with which a new Parliament will be summoned. I proceed to speak of the work which it will have to do.

I need not dwell on the elementary and ever-abiding duties of the Ministry, such as the maintenance of the country's honour, of the general peace, of the rights of all classes, of our insular security; but I will state that we desire to found the credit and influence of our foreign policy upon a resolution to ask from foreign Powers nothing but what in like circumstances we should give ourselves, and as steadily to respect their rights as we would tenaciously uphold our own.

With regard to the unhappy war on the Gold Coast, our object has been to prosecute it with vigour, subject to a due regard to the exigencies of climate and the value of human life, and only within the limits which justice and future security prescribe. We shall aim at the establishment, not only of peace, but of friendship with the Ashantees, and we shall, I hope, seek to draw from what has happened a lesson on the duty of avoiding in future the first entrance into equivocal and entangling engagements. Meantime, we repose the utmost confidence in the British General, officers, and soldiers; and we cherish the hope that we are about to emerge at an early date, and on good terms, from the conflict.

When I turn to the general subjects of internal legislation, I have to speak rather as a member of a party than as a member of a Cabinet. For it is not the duty of a Cabinet to bind itself, or to mature its collective views on all subjects of public interest, but only upon such as are to form the early subjects of practical treatment.

I fear that the time has not yet come when you can anticipate a diminution in the calls for legislative labour. Permanent and solid as is the Union of the three Kingdoms, they present varieties of circumstance, of organization, and even of law. These varieties, combined with the vast development of Imperial interests, add seriously to the duties of Parliament, which, indeed, have reached a point where they seem, for the present, to defy all efforts to overtake them. I think we ought not only to admit, but to welcome,

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every improvement in the organisation of local and subordinate authority, which, under the unquestioned control of Parliament, would tend to lighten its labours, and to expedite the public business.

As regards the important Act of 1870 for the promotion of education, I am one of those who had no preference for the later over the earlier adjustments of the Bill. But they were adjustments adapted to the state of public opinion at the time; and it appears to me that no main provision of the measure can advantageously be reconsidered without the aid of an experience such as we have not yet acquired. With regard to one or two points, calculated to create an amount of uneasiness out of proportion to their real importance or difficulty, I do not doubt that the wisdom of the renovated Legislature will discover the means of their accommodation.

Both in Scotland and in Ireland there are many questions requiring the attention of Parliament. Among such, however, as are peculiar to them, I will only now mention the completion of the weighty legislation of last year by the reconstruction of their judicial establishments, and by admitting them to the advantages, not yet measured by experience, of the new Court of Appeal.

It is more appropriate to the nature of an address such as this that I should touch upon subjects which are, in the main, of a common interest to all the three countries. I will, however, say with special relation to England that it seems almost a reproach to our Parliaments that, down to the present time, we should have been unable to deal effectively with the Local Government and institutions of this great metropolis; and I must also express my hope that the inquiries of the Commission appointed to examine into the property and income of the Universities and Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge may lead to a great further extension of the benefits conferred by those great and powerful bodies.

The laws respecting the transfer, the descent, and the occupation of land; the laws respecting game; the laws respecting the sale of spirituous liquors, the laws affecting the relations between employer and employed, the laws of rating and of local government,

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are among the subjects likely to come in turn under the notice of the new Parliament. In some of these matters there is, in my judgment, room for extensive improvement; and they all, I trust, will be dealt with in a spirit of impartial justice.

Of all the changes marking the present day, there is none which I view with more heartfelt satisfaction than the progressive rise of wages in the agricultural districts. I view this rise as the natural and proper, though long delayed, result of economic laws, as the removal of something like a national discredit; as carrying with it a great addition to the stock, never too abundant, of human happiness; and as a new guarantee for the stability of the Throne and institutions of the country.

I have never concealed my opinion that those institutions will be further strengthened by granting to the counties generally that extended franchise which has been conceded with general satisfaction to the towns, and to the populations of a number of rural districts with a central village, which may perhaps be called peasant-boroughs. I earnestly desire to witness the formation of a mature public opinion on a subject which has hardly yet obtained all the attention which it deserves. I, for one, will say nothing upon it that could tend to arouse the jealousies of class or of party; and I cherish the hope that at no distant day our loyal, patient, and, as I hold, intelligent, peasantry may, together with other important classes now unenfranchised, for no other reason than that they reside beyond the boundaries of boroughs, receive this boon at the hands of the Legislature, without conflict, without intrigue, and by general consent.

I come now to questions of expenditure and finance.

It may be stated with truth that next to the great Irish questions of Church and Land, now happily disposed of, the elections of 1868 turned, in no small degree, upon Expenditure. I do not deny that we charged our predecessors with improvidence in the stewardship of the public funds.

It has been shown by my friend Mr. Childers, in his place in Parliament, conclusively, and without reply, that we have not forgotten the declarations of 1868, nor receded from them. In the

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estimates of our first two years for the defensive services of army and navy we were able to propose reductions amounting in round numbers to £4,000,000 in the charge of our peace establishments. It is true that we are not able at this moment to place such a sum to our credit in comparing our estimates with those of the last Government I am far from saying that we have perfect reason to be satisfied with our own efforts or with the results of them. Still, let it be considered, first, by what special and necessary acts of policy they have been hindered; secondly, what the results actually are. We cannot escape the effect of such calls as that for the abolition of purchase, which was, I think, well described as the redemption of the army, or for the augmentation of the education vote, to the great and unquestioned benefit of the country.

But, notwithstanding these demands, notwithstanding the calls arising at the period of the great war of 1870, notwithstanding the serious burden of the rise of prices, something not wholly insignificant has been achieved. Setting aside the Debt, and founding the comparison on the basis of what may be called the optional expenditure, derived from taxes and forming the proper test of the disposition of a Government, it was shown that a saving had been effected at the close of the very last financial year amounting to £2,350,000, and this, as we contend, with no diminution, but with a great increase, of our defensive force, both naval and military.

Upon a review of the finance of the last five years, we are enabled to state that, notwithstanding the purchase of the telegraphs for a sum exceeding £9,000,000, the agregate amount of the National Debt has been reduced by more than £20,000,000; that taxes have been lowered or abolished (over and above any amount imposed) to the extent of £12,500,000; that during the present year the Alabama Indemnity has been paid, and the charge of the Ashantee War will be met out of revenue; and that in estimating, as we can now venture to do, the income of the coming year (and, for the moment, assuming the general scale of charge to continue as it was fixed during the last Session), we do not fear to anticipate as the probable balance a surplus exceeding rather than falling short of £5,000,000.

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The existence of such a surplus will offer, in our judgment, a great opportunity of affording relief to the community, and an opportunity which ought to be turned to the very best account.

I have accepted with much reluctance the charge of the finances of the country, in addition to my other duties. But as this is now the tenth occasion on which I am called, as the Minister immediately responsible, to consider the financial arrangements of the coming year, you may be willing to believe that I am not speaking lightly when I proceed to indicate an outline of the boons, which, in the absence of some gravely unfavourable and unforeseen incident, it will be in the power of the new Parliament at once to confer.

In the first place, there is a very general desire that some new assistance should be afforded to the ratepayers of the country from funds at present under the command of the State.

The Government have been unable to meet the views of those who appear to have thought that, provided only a large amount of public money could be had in any form to relieve the rates, no great heed need be paid to anything else. But they have never felt themselves compelled to deny the wish of such as think that a further portion of the charges hitherto borne by real and immovable property should, with judicious accompanying arrangements, be placed upon property generally. Their endeavour has been, and their resolution is, to have a thorough and comprehensive, not a partial, handling of the question, and in our future proceedings we shall, I trust, exert ourselves to keep in view all that it involves: to strengthen the invaluable traditions and to improve the organs of Local Government, to keep central control within the limits of sound policy, to maintain, and if possible, to enhance, the guarantees for provident administration, to avoid the repetition of unseemly contests, and the danger which would arise if Parliament were gradually to lay upon labour a portion of the burdens hitherto borne by property; in a word, to reform as well as enlarge the aid granted by the State to local expenditure. The first item, then, which I have to set down in the financial arrangements proper for the year is relief, but relief coupled with reform, of local taxation.

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What I have said refers properly to England, but it would be impossible to exclude from view the case of Scotland, which is very closely analogous, or that of Ireland, which presents larger variations.

I now turn to a subject of a less complex character, but of even greater importance; I mean the Income Tax.

According to the older financial tradition, the Income Tax was a war tax. For such a purpose it is invaluable. Men are willing to sacrifice much, not only of their means, but of their privacy, time, and comfort, at the call of patriotism.

In 1842 the Income Tax was employed by Sir Robert Peel, partly to cover a serious deficit in the revenue, but principally to allow of important advances in the direction of Free Trade. I need not dwell on the great work of liberation which has been accomplished by its aid. Mainly perhaps on this account, it has been borne with an exemplarly patience. But no Government has been able to make it perpetual, like our taxes in general, or even to obtain its renewal for any very long term of years. Since 1860 it has been granted by an annual Act. During a long time, for reasons on which it is not necessary for me here to dwell, the country cherished, together with the desire, the expectation or hope of its extinction. But the sum annually drawn from it formed so heavy an item in the accounts from year to year that it appeared to have grown unmanageable. It has, however, been the happy fortune of Mr. Lowe to bring it down, first from 6d. to 4d., and then from 4d. to 3d., in the pound. The proceeds of the Income Tax for the present year are expected to be between 5,000,000*l.* and 6,000,000*l.*, and at a sacrifice for the financial year of something less than 5,500,000*l.* the country may enjoy the advantage and relief of its total repeal.

I do not hesitate to affirm that an effort should now be made to attain this advantage, nor to declare that, according to my judgment, it is in present circumstances practicable.

And yet while making this recommendation and avowal, I have more to add. It will have been observed that the proposals I have mentioned contemplate principally the relief of rateable and othe property, although there are many among the payers of Income

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Tax the association of whom with that term seems almost to mock them. But it is manifest that we ought not to aid the rates, and remove the Income Tax, without giving to the general consumer, and giving him simultaneously, some marked relief in the class of articles of popular consumption.

It may be observed that the changes I have indicated would dispose of more, indeed considerably more, than the surplus I have named; and that I am not entitled to anticipate any larger balance of available revenue during the coming financial year from the present sources as they are fixed by law. But I have said nothing to preclude the Government from asking Parliament to consider, in conjunction with those great remissions, what moderate assistance could be had from judicious adjustments of existing taxes. And it is scarcely necessary for me to add that, admitting, as I do admit, the declarations of 1868, I for one could not belong to a Government which did not on every occasion seek to enlarge its resources by a wise economy. But these, I admit, are general declarations. Their whole value depends upon their future and practical development. On this subject I will frankly allow that the question is for the moment one of confidence. The policy of the Government for the last five years in particular, the character and opinions of my colleagues, and the financial and commercial legislation with which I may say that, since 1842, I have been associated, are before you. I can only add that I have not spoken lightly, but deliberately, and with full persuasion.

I have now, Gentlemen, endeavoured to supply to you the means of estimating generally, but with, I hope, sufficient accuracy, the views and intentions of the Government with respect to policy and immediate legislation, but more especially with reference to the financial work which they now offer themselves to undertake and to perform. Undertaken and performed I trust it will be, whether by us or by others. It is for you to say by whom. As for all that lies beyond, in the region of the many and arduous questions to some of which I have referred, I can give no unlimited pledge of personal aid or service in the 42nd year of a laborious public life, and with the desire which I feel both entitled and bound to cherish

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for repose. But for the present issue I am at your service, and so I trust are the colleagues who have performed the work and made the character of the present Government, and to whom I owe a lively and unending gratitude.

It is sometimes said, Gentlemen, that we of the Liberal Government and Party have endangered the institutions and worried all the interests of the country. As to the interests, I am aware of no one of them that we have injured. If we have unhappily offended any, it has been neither our intention nor our wish, but the consequence of our anxiety to consult the highest interest of all, in which all others are involved—the interest of the nation.

As to the institutions of the country, Gentlemen, the charge is the very same that you have been accustomed to hear urged against Liberal Governments in general for the last 40 years. It is time to test by a general survey of the past this trite and vague allegation. Now, there has elapsed a period of 40, or more exactly 43, years since the Liberal Party acquired the main direction of public affairs. This followed another period of about 40 years, beginning with the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, during which there had been an almost unbroken rule of their opponents, who claimed and were reputed to be the great preservers of the institutions of the country. But I ask you to judge the men by the general results. I fear we must admit that the term of 40 years of Tory rule, which closed in 1830, and to which you are invited to return, left the institutions of the country weaker, aye, even in its peace and order, less secure than at the commencement of the period it had found them. I am confident that if now the present Government be dismissed from the service of their Gracious Mistress and of the country, the Liberal party which they represent, may at least challenge contradiction when they say that their term of 40 years leaves the Throne, the laws, and the institutions of the country not weaker, but stronger, than it found them.

Such, Gentlemen, is the issue placed before you, and before the nation, for your decision. If the trust of this Administration be by the effect of the present elections virtually renewed, I, for one,

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will serve you, for what remains of my time, faithfully; if the confidence of the country be taken from us and handed over to others whom you may judge more worthy, I, for one, shall accept cheerfully my dismissal.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your most obliged and most faithful servant,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

11, Carlton House-terrace, Jan. 23, 1874.

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MR. DISRAELI'S ADDRESS.

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE COUNTY OF BUCKINGHAM.

Gentlemen,—Mr. Gladstone has informed the electors of Greenwich that Her Majesty has been advised by her Ministers to dissolve the present Parliament.

Whether this step has been taken as a means of avoiding the humbling confession by the Prime Minister that he has, in a fresh violation of Constitutional law, persisted in retaining for several months a seat to which he was no longer entitled ; or has been resorted to by his Government in order to postpone or evade the day of reckoning for a war carried on without communication with Parliament, and the expenditure for which Parliament has not sanctioned, it is unnecessary at present to consider. It is sufficient to point out that if, under any circumstances, the course, altogether unprecedented, of calling together Parliament by special summons for the dispatch of business, and then dissolving it before its meeting, could be justified, there is in the present case no reason whatever suggested why this was not done six weeks ago, and why the period of the year usually devoted to business before Easter, which must now be wasted, should not thus have been saved.

Gentlemen, I appeal to you again for the continuance of that confidence which you have extended to me on nine different occasions, running over a period longer than a generation of men.

The Prime Minister has addressed to his constituents a prolix narrative, in which he mentions many of the questions that have occupied or may occupy public attention, but in which I find nothing definite as to the policy he would pursue—except this, that having the prospect of a large surplus he will, if retained in power, devote that surplus to the remission of taxation, which would be the course of any party or any Ministry. But what is remarkable in his proposals is that on the one hand they are accompanied by the disquieting information that the surplus, in order to

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make it adequate, must be enlarged by an "adjustment," which must mean an increase of existing taxes; and that, on the other hand, his principal measures of relief will be the diminution of local taxation, and the abolition of the income tax—measures which the Conservative party have always favoured, and which the Prime Minister and his friends have always opposed.

Gentlemen, I have ever endeavoured, and if returned to Parliament I shall, whether in or out of office, continue the endeavour, to propose or support all measures calculated to improve the condition of the people of this kingdom. But I do not think this great end is advanced by incessant and harassing legislation. The English people are governed by their customs as much as by their laws, and there is nothing they more dislike than unnecessary restraint and meddling interference in their affairs.

Generally speaking, I should say of the administration of the last five years that it would have been better for us all if there had been a little more energy in our foreign policy and a little less in our domestic legislation.

By an act of folly or of ignorance rarely equalled, the present Ministry relinquished a treaty which secured us the freedom of the Straits of Malacca for our trade with China and Japan, and they at the same time entering, on the West Coast of Africa, into those "equivocal and entangling engagements" which the Prime Minister now deprecates, involved us in the Ashantee war. The honour of the country now requires that we should prosecute that war with the vigour necessary to insure success; but when that honour is vindicated it will be the duty of Parliament to enquire by what means we were led into a costly and destructive contest, which neither Parliament nor the country has ever sanctioned, and of the necessity or justice of which, in its origin, they have not been made aware.

The question of a further reform of the House of Commons is again suggested by the Prime Minister. I think unwisely. The argument for extending to the counties the household franchise of the towns, on the ground of the existing system being anomalous, is itself fallacious. There has always been a difference between the

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franchises of the two divisions of the country, and no one has argued more strongly than the present Prime Minister against the contemplated identity of suffrage. The Conservative party view this question without prejudice. They have proved that they are not afraid of popular rights. But the late Reform Act was a large measure, which, in conjunction with the Ballot, has scarcely been tested by experience, and they will hesitate before they sanction further legislation which will inevitably involve among other considerable changes the disfranchisement of at least all boroughs in the kingdoms comprising less than 40,000inhabitants.

Gentlemen, the impending general election is one of no mean importance for the future character of this kingdom. There is reason to hope from the address of the Prime Minister, putting aside some ominous suggestions which it contains as to the expediency of a local and subordinate legislature, that he is not, certainly at present, opposed to our national institutions, or to the maintenance of the integrity of the Empire. But unfortunately among his adherents some assail the Monarchy, others impugn the independence of the House of Lords, while there are those who would relieve Parliament altogether from any share in the government of one portion of the United Kingdom.

Others again urge him to pursue his peculiar policy by disestablishing the Anglican, as he has despoiled the Irish Church, while trusted colleagues in his Cabinet openly concur with them in their desire altogether to thrust religion from the place which it ought to occupy in national education.

These, gentlemen, are solemn issues, and the impending general election must decide them. Their solution must be arrived at when Europe is more deeply stirred than at any period since the Reformation, and when the cause of civil liberty and religious freedom mainly depends upon the strength and stability of England, I ask you to return me to the House of Commons to resist every proposal which may impair that strength, and to support by every means her Imperial sway.

B. DISRAELI.

Hughenden Manor, January 24, 1874.