

Morning Star and Catholic Messenger, NEW ORLEANS, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1878. THE IRISH QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT.

Debate on Mitchell Henry's Amendment to the Address.

MOBILIZING SPEECH BY A. M. SULLIVAN.

(Proceedings of the British Parliament Jan. 18th.)

Mr. Redmond remarked that not only had no member of her Majesty's Government spoken on this subject, but not a single English or Scotch member had risen to address the House in reference to it. The Irish people would deeply feel the conduct of the House in declining to discuss Irish questions. This premature old man, who was actually dying, had been subjected to the horrible punishment of penal servitude. We had been talking lately a great deal of the unjust acts of people abroad, but the ill-treatment which this man had received was most disgraceful. Some people said that Home Rulers asked too much; but they said so in ignorance. A vast number of the Irish people, let him tell the House, said the Home Rulers asked far too little. And they said the Home Rulers did not ask it in the right way. They said that the grievances of Ireland would never be remedied by constitutional agitation. He himself was opposed to desperate courses, but he could assure the House that the day would never come when the people of Ireland would retire from the demands he had alluded to.

Mr. Cross said that there were circumstances connected with Davitt's case which induced the Government to release him; and he denied that the act had anything to do with the Eastern complication. As to the McCarthy, before the jury at the coroner's inquest had found the verdict they did, it would have been wiser if they had heard the evidence of some one from the prison to speak as to his treatment there. McCarthy had been attended by the surgeons of the prison, and had been treated more leniently on account of his state. The Government would order a most searching inquiry into the case, and when the report was made it would be laid before the House.

Mr. Plunket said he had refrained from speaking because if he did he knew it would be said that he had been bullied into it. This was the first time on an Irish question that honorable members from that country had found fault because nobody opposed them. He had heard of an armistice among the party now known to history as the obstructionists, but before this was brought about one of them was told that unless he was prepared to withdraw what he had said he would be required to step over the channel to Belgium, and see if he could abstract a bullet (laughter, and cries of "Name him.") There was an armistice. Then it was understood there was to be an amendment to the Address. No one knew what the address was to be. No one knew whether Home Rule was to be granted immediately or not, but whatever the Address was to be they were sworn on the altar of a common friendship that they would amend it. He hoped he should not offend the honorable member who moved it by adopting his own expression, and saying that the time chosen was happily an inopportune one. The grounds which Mr. Butt once moved an amendment to the Address was that the freedom of the Press was restricted, and there were one or two other grievances. The Press was free in Ireland as in England, and free than in any other country in Europe, and at this moment he rejoiced to say his country was freer from coercive laws than it had been at any time for one hundred years. Therefore it did appear to him that the time chosen for this motion was "hideously inopportune."

Mr. A. M. Sullivan, whose rising was hailed with enthusiastic cheers by the Irish members said:

Mr.—The House stands indebted to the honorable and gallant gentleman the member for Waterford. His motion has broken "the cold chain of silence" that hung over the Government benches, and has elicited from the honorable and learned gentlemen who have just sat down (Mr. Plunket) a most interesting and able other characteristics, we have all admired for its varied play of humor, eloquence, and ability. He had no need to apologise to the House for the time he was occupying. This is the business, and this of all others is the subject with which the time of the House should be occupied. It is a subject which has been discussed three weeks earlier than usual, and within these three weeks there should be good time for discussing and considering the Irish question—for fully considered and discussed we are fixedly determined it shall be. Mr. Speaker, that hon. and learned gentleman said of the men amidst whom I stand that they were "maquering and masquerading." Masquerading! The phrase is not offensive, I suppose, or he would not have applied it; so I may use it too, and say that the thing which is really intolerable is to see the grandson of the great Plunket masquerading on the floor of this House as an Imperialist. We are supposed to be "maquering and masquerading" with the Turkish question. One of the earliest wrongs which the subject Christians under the Moslem yoke were made to feel was that statutes the children of Christian parents were seized and carried into the Turkish camp, trained up in Turkish ideas, embraced the faith and were made to wear the turban, and appeared many a time, in their hands, to wage war upon their kindred and their race! Even so has it been with us in Ireland through many a sad chapter of our country's story. Sometimes by force, sometimes by guile, sometimes by one influence, sometimes by another, the British Government has endeavored to drive its children who bore great names, and might have greatly served their country; and we have seen these converts, so to-night, skilfully set in the fore-front of the assault when their countrymen were to be outdone. Who is our accuser? The voice is the voice of an Irishman; the wit, the ability, the play of fancy and of genius, the rhetorical skill—all, all are Irish, but all are used against Ireland! Who, I repeat, is our accuser? If we stand here to-night, as we do, upon the floor of this House to maintain in the face of the empire and of Europe the protest of Ireland against the memorable crime that was perpetrated in the year 1845, whose plaudits are we seeking? Who pledged us to undying hate and eternal war against that crime? The honorable and learned gentleman had the temerity to use a phrase for ever notable in the history of his family when he spoke of men swearing up to the throne that they were that great Irishman, that distinguished constitutional lawyer, who declared that if the Irish Parliament were successfully overthrown he would bring his child—his child—who did he not say his grandchild—and swear him upon the altar of his country to wage relentless war against that monstrous wrong? How little did he imagine that that child, that night, the representative of Ireland should discover in the ranks of their imperial adversaries the heritor of his great name, and in no small degree of his genius, false to his principles and his teachings, false to his lineage and his fame. But, sir, I turn from the man to his argu-

ments. He drew for us a picture of Ireland many years ago O'Connell was defending a sheep-stealer. In his speech to the jury he drew a glowing picture of the prisoner at the bar as a model husband and father (he was not married at all), a dutiful son, an exemplary citizen, virtuous, pious, industrious, and so on. At this point the prisoner in the dock could stand no longer, and he exclaimed to those around him, "I never knew before that I bore so high a character." Well, sir, we have heard to-night the defender of British rule in Ireland extolling the virtues and excellence of his client; and well may the prisoner at the bar in that awful, so virtuous, so meritorious as all that. Only believe the hon. and learned gentleman and there is not the slightest need of changing anything—the slightest possibility of improving anything—in Ireland. Everything there is already perfect in the matter of government, law, and administration. There is no spot on the face of the habitable globe. It is the home of happiness, peace, prosperity, of beneficent rule and abundant loyalty. (Conservative cheers.) Hon. gentlemen opposite cheer. You evidently think so too. You know all about it. You know Ireland better than we do. You are better entitled to speak for Ireland. But, sir, the question before the House is much wider, and greater, and more serious, than the merits of the Irish "bills" which the Government has promised. If it were a matter of a better or a worse grand jury law, or a better or a worse Intermediate Education bill, or a better or a worse law of common law, or a better or a worse law of the present. The question we raise is that for which it may be said Parliament has been especially convoked. We have been told in the royal speech of a possible danger near at hand, of precautions and preparations that may be necessary for the defence of the power and stability of the British Empire. The wisest precaution and the most potential preparation which the Government could make. The matter is glossed over by avoiding phrases, but the danger that you all mean is war, a war in which England will have to fight for her very existence as a nation. If that war breaks out, if it is not averted, as I hope it will be, England will find herself in such desperate straits as she has not known for four hundred years. Your army, small but brave and fearless as ever, will behave with its traditional valor; wherever it may be sent, on whatever field it may fight, the army of this country will exhibit those special qualities that have made it famous in the world-wide fame. I would say as much for it even were it not composed as largely as it is of my own brave countrymen. But there is not a military man sitting in this House who does not know and feel the truth of what I say—that a recent memorandum in Europe has demonstrated that courage and prestige of our army have been largely as they are used to do sixty years ago against overwhelming odds; and that your army of a hundred thousand, or a hundred and fifty thousand, men would be utterly powerless before the hosts that now stand arrayed and disciplined on the continent of Europe. Should this calamity befall, should this trouble for you ensue, should this war break out upon inanimate sword and bayonet, and ship and gun, rather than upon stalwart arms and patriotic enthusiasm, your best reliance will be? Should that crisis come, right sure am I that amongst the English masses a patriotic fervor will answer to your call. Through the Fenian and the English and Scottish it will be so, but will it be so in Ireland? In the spirit of the oath which I swore at that table—nay, higher obligations still, by the duty I owe to conscience and to truth—I dare all misconception and outcry to deliver at this momentous crisis my solemn testimony and belief that if this empire enters upon a struggle of such magnitude, and that in the attitude which Hungary occupied towards Austria previous to Sadowa, the popular enthusiasm which you will receive in England and Scotland will not respond to you in Ireland (shouts of "Oh!" interruptions and cheers). I was prepared for your exclamations, and I do not complain, for they are well merited. I have made it a rule, and I am naturally unwilling to be contradicted, that I will not say anything which will vindicate the truth of my words and the integrity of my motives. Twenty or twenty-five years ago there stood upon the floor of this House a band of Irish members, struggling, as we struggle now, to persuade you to listen to Irish demands. Study for yourselves what was done at that time, and you will see that the words were not spoken down, they were laughed at, they were denounced or derided. You had in that day—as you always have—some gifted and eloquent Irishmen in your service to get up and do your work against his countrymen—to contradict their testimony, to tell you pleasant things of which you had no right to know, while their honest warnings of danger were shrieked against as seditious insinuations. John Francis Maguire and others ventured to say in this House, as I say now, that there was danger and dissatisfaction in Ireland. They were set upon angrily as almost traitors. They were contradicted and contradicted, and their testimony, by overwhelming voice, declared their testimony untrue, and that Ireland was peaceable, contented and loyal to the core. Alas! a year or two barely passed when events threw a terrible light on all this. At that very moment my unfortunate countrymen were being sworn in by the Government in secret conspiracy for armed insurrection. Barely a year had passed away when the crowded dock, the convict ship, the penal gang, the triangle and the bloody lash—nay, the scaffold itself—furnished a frightful contradiction to the pleasant testimonies which you preferred to believe; a frightful contradiction to the warnings you were given; a frightful contradiction to the promises you made? Like the story of the recent Fenian amnesty which we have heard to-night, measures prayed for in vain in the hour of your tranquility, when concession would have grace and efficacy, were conceded amidst public quietude and almost panic. Writing some six weeks ago to a friend in the States, I said— a fair-minded, a kind-hearted and a high-principled Englishman—yes, I believe in the existence of such men, not in scores or hundreds, but in hundreds of thousands—I complained of this, and asked how and why it was that English statesmen and politicians should thus put a premium on treachery and revolt. That land of 1850, was grand in part, but away from the terrible tragedy of Ballycove had startled the empire. In 1868 you suddenly overthrew the Irish Church, because, as you avowed, of the spread of Fenianism. In the face of the men whose warnings you had angrily resented a few hours previously, you

can come down to this House to concede in an hour of alarm what you had refused in the time of tranquillity. Is this narrative true or false? Am I, or am I not, reciting facts show? That by some means, possibly some one of the noblest and noblest men of our age, as men like my colleagues and myself, who beseech you to be just in time. You resist concession in time of calm, and yield it only in the face of real or fancied peril. If it be not so, let some one get up to-night, and name for us any great national concession made to Ireland under any other circumstances. Am I to be told that perhaps it is still to be. You will complain of my words; you will say I do not warn but threaten; and you will prefer to believe those who tell you the Irish masses are contented and well affected, as enthusiastically ready as Englishmen could be to pour out their blood in your defence. But I do not blame I look into the future, and can await my vindication. Do not affect to mistake our position in this crisis of the empire. We are not so many advocates of this or that bill. We are the national representation of Ireland, here in overwhelming majority to demand restoration of the parliamentary rule and constitutional government. We are projecting no new proposal, like the friends of this or that great reform or amelioration. We are here to call for the restitution of what we enjoyed and possessed, but which you wrong from us by means held to vitiate and render illegal every public transaction between man and man, between nation and nation, and want on our own. Possession gives you no title of it, for no time runs against a claim asserted and renewed, as ours had been, from generation to generation. Legally we stand to-day where we stood seventy years ago. Restore to Ireland the reign of law! It is all she asks as the price of her friendship, and she asks it in vain. Take nothing from you that belongs to you. The price of her friendship! You are now, in view of a terrible emergency, possibly at hand, searching Europe through for allies. Here we are to be empowered to offer you one worth the best you could elsewhere find—the alliance, the hearty friendship, the on-the-spot support, the ready aid, the help, the deep reason to wish this question settled, and to see a cordial feeling established between the two countries before dark clouds grow darker, and while yet the reconciliation can be free and generous and efficacious. The peace, the happiness, the tranquillity of Ireland are most dear to me; and I do not wish to see my country destroyed by being made perhaps a battlefield of the coming struggle. I do not want the ghastly episode of some Continental despot making what we would call a diversion in Ireland, wasting the blood and blighting the hopes of my country in a mere stroke of tactics to serve his own ends. I do not wish to see my country destroyed by being made perhaps a battlefield of the coming struggle. 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