

Colonel S. Knox said that his object having been attained in thus formally drawing the attention of the house to the disloyal petition which had been presented to them, he would not divide the house upon the question.

The motion that the petition be laid upon the table of the house was then agreed to.

The following is a copy of the petition which was presented to the House of Commons on Friday evening by Mr. Bright:

"To the Honorable the House of Commons of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of England sheweth:—

"That, your petitioners, whilst disapproving of the movement known as Fenianism, in so far as it is a secret movement, into which men are admitted by oaths of secrecy, whereas all combinations should be open and ready to submit their objects to free discussion, whilst blaming the recent outbreak as a resort to violence where it had not been shown that violence is the only means remaining of attaining the end proposed, and whilst, therefore, hoping that order may be restored to Ireland by the judicious use of the power of the English Government;

"Your petitioners remembering, nevertheless, that the history of Ireland has been the history, first, of imperfect conquest and long neglect, then of war and dispossession of the Irish people, then of legal injustice and harsh repression of the disturbances caused by the said injustice;

"Remembering also that the actual Government of Ireland is the government of the conquered by the conqueror, as is shown by the maintenance, against the undoubted wishes of the bulk of the nation, of the Irish Church Establishment, and by the enforcement of a system of land laws at variance with the traditions and feelings of the Irish people; that, in short, it is a government in the interest not of Ireland, but of England, or rather of the State Church and territorial aristocracy of England;

"That by the present distribution of political power the Irish nation is unable to make its wishes adequately felt by the stronger country to which it is bound; that in the consequent apparent hopelessness of a remedy for the evils which press on their country, honorable Irishmen may, however erroneously, feel justified in resorting to force; that, in a word, there is a legitimate ground for the chronic discontent of which Fenianism is the expression, and therefore palliation for the errors of Fenians;

"Your petitioners, therefore, pray your honorable house that it may take such measures as it shall judge fit.

"Firstly, to secure the revision of the sentences already passed on the Fenians—sentenced of great and, in the judgment of your petitioners, generally excessive and irritating severity.

"Secondly, to provide in any case that prisoners suffering as the Fenians are for a political offence shall not, during the execution of their sentence, be confined in common with prisoners suffering for offences against the ordinary criminal laws of their country.

"Thirdly, your petitioners, justly alarmed by their recollection of the atrocities perpetrated by the English troops in Ireland in 1798, as also by the recollection of the conduct of the English army and its officers in India and Jamaica, and by the suggestions of the public press and the general tone of the wealthy classes with regard to the suppression of rebellion, pray your honorable house to provide that the utmost moderation, and strict adherence to the laws of fair humane warfare may be inculcated on the army now serving in Ireland; and

"Lastly, your petitioners pray that the prisoners taken may be well treated before trial, and judged and sentenced with as much leniency as is consistent with the preservation of order; and that in the punishments awarded there may be none of a degrading nature, as such punishments seem to your petitioners inapplicable to men whose cause and whose offence are alike free from dishonor, however misguided they may be as to the special end they have in view, or as to the means which they have adopted to attain that end.

"And your petitioners will ever pray—

This very remarkable letter appears in the *Edinburgh Scotsman*, to whose editor it has been addressed:

EYRE SQUARE, GALWAY, May 2, 1867.

SIR—Yesterday, in Dublin, two Fenians were sentenced to death, on the charge of high treason. One of them was recommended to mercy by the jury. Both are recommended to mercy by humanity and common sense. You will agree with me that it is a disgrace to our country and epoch that political charges, however heinous, should be liable to the extreme penalty. In the case, however, of Irish, or Hiberno-American Irish, there are special extenuating circumstances, various and weighty. Within the last twenty-five years a multitude almost equal to the entire population of Scotland, has emigrated from Ireland to America. Almost the entirety of this emigration has been self-supporting. Can the history of the world produce a parallel instance of peasant kindness, generosity, and unselfishness? Among the millions of Irish now in America, there is not a solitary one who has a kind word to say of the government of the old country. Is there an instance in history of the opinion of millions, loudly and repeatedly expressed, being entirely in the wrong? Some three millions, then, or more, have of late years quitted this island. A million left within the space of three years. These simple facts are terribly, painfully, tragically eloquent. But for the wide plains of America, nothing earthly could have saved this country from a bloody internecine war of peasants against proprietor. Should we not be thankful for what, with no thanks to ourselves, we have escaped? Should we not be provident against future, not impossible, contingencies? I assure you upon my word of honor, that the general condition of this country is misrepresented, even in the columns of its own journalism. The country is almost throughout rife with disaffection. Personal loyalty for the Sovereign is weak, and the detestation of English rule is almost universal. It is insanity on the part of our statesmen to be driving thus an engine with the safety-valve down. It is true they may rake out all the coal, and achieve security by bringing it to a stand-still; but such a step would be an indication of cowardice rather than of sagacity. The Catholic priests have denounced Fenianism, but only and avowedly on the ground that its chances were hopeless—not that its motives or objects were wrong. I will venture on my own responsibility to assert that, in the west, south, and south-east of Ireland, nine in ten of the men and women of all classes, excepting the holders of land, sympathize warmly with the Fenian cause. I have scarcely conversed with a single gentleman or lady, or boy or girl, who had not a kindly word for their patriotism, although very many spoke regretfully of their lack of common sense. Under such circumstances, can we learn without something akin to horror that two poor, mis-

guided, but well-meaning lovers of their country have been condemned to the death of a felon? Are we living in a Christian land, in civilized Europe in the nineteenth century? I beg and entreat of you, by your love of justice, by your love of freedom, to exert all your personal and public influence in gaining a commutation of this horrible sentence. Let folly be treated as folly, but let it never be placed in the category of brutality. Were I a native Irishman, my pleading might naturally be taken as one-sided and partial. I am an Englishman, and have passed only three years in Ireland. But I have traveled far and wide in it; I have made it my business to sift in all directions the opinions of Irish men and women of all ranks, and I have come slowly and sadly to the conclusion that disaffection in this unhappy country is not a crime, is almost a duty. I wish I could have you with me for six weeks of this summer, and I would take you with me over the hills of Connemara, and show you hills unsurpassed in beauty in Europe, and peasants unsurpassed in misery and patience. O God, how long? I am sad at heart to be placed in the center of so oppressed a people. They, poor things, are under the idea that their enemies are the *Times*, the English Government, and the English people. With regard to the *Times* they are right enough. But far more terrible enemies than the flippant, insolent, and half-informed writers in the great London journal, are the native landlords and the native middlemen. Here and there are specimens of noble landlords; here and there are specimens of almost tolerable middlemen; but the classes, as classes, are bad, selfish, and unpatriotic. Until the former mend of themselves or be forced to mend, and until the latter are pretty well exterminated, Ireland will be a trouble and a disgrace to England. In conclusion, I once more beg most earnestly of you to plead the cause of Burke and Doran, as those two poor fellows have in reality been led into nine-tenths of their folly by men whose selfish exactions have been and are legalized and enforced by the cruel and unjust laws of the land.

I am, &c.,
D'ARCY WENTWORTH THOMPSON,
Greek Professor, Queen's College, Galway.

FENIAN NEWS.

Fenianism in Montana.

A State Convention of the Brotherhood was called by the State Centre, A. O'Connell, Esq., to meet at Red Mountain City, Highland Gulch, Deer Lodge county, on the 21st of May. The State Centre, in the call for this Convention, said:

"BROTHERS:—Believing that the year 1867 will be in a great measure the most trying one that ever dawned on our glorious organization, and as our brethren everywhere are preparing for the final struggle, and believing it to be the duty of all true Irishmen to assume their portion of the great responsibility, it is earnestly hoped that you will cheerfully respond to this call. The importance of the business to be transacted will fully justify you in whatever sacrifice you may make, as this will be the most important Convention ever convened, and perhaps ever will be, in the Territory.

"I remain fraternally yours,

"A. O'CONNELL,
"Territorial Centre, Montana."

W. R. ROBERTS, Esq., President of the Fenian Brotherhood, sailed for Europe on the 1st of this month. We were aware of Col. Robert's intention of going to France for some time, but, as it was important to keep the matter quiet, we refrained from giving it publicity. Those fellows attached to the New York press having burrowed themselves into somebody's confidence and discovered the *item*, have given it to the country at large. There is one thing they won't be likely to find out—that is, his business in Europe. Col. Roberts is expected to return in two months.

Fenianism in Nebraska.

SPEECH OF CAPTAIN WILLIAM H. GRACE, AT OMAHA, ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 22D, 1867.

"A national movement springing from the masses of an enslaved or oppressed people—for it is they who are always oppressed—in order to be permanently successful, must necessarily be slow of consummation. For it must create from its very fountain an intelligent guiding literature of its own, that will represent it justly and legitimately before the world for what it is worth.

When the Fenian Brotherhood proper was started about eight years ago, it found the great majority of the Irish people ignorant of everything that goes to cultivate man and fit him for society, so that he can think and act intelligently for himself on all things appertaining to his benefit, and the small majority who possessed a lettered education attained it in schools where it was treason to read the genuine history of their country, and where they were taught to look up to the aristocracy with a slavish reverential awe.

Besides being in a state of mental degradation, which was in itself enough to make them incapable of knowing their own resources, the Irish people had blended in their composition, provincial petty animosities against each other, such as county or personal feuds, which caused them, under the cry of faction, to fight and kill one another on railroads and in whisky-shops throughout the land.

This was the state of the Irish people when the words Fenian Brotherhood were first presented to their gaze by a few men, of no doubt a good intention at the time, but who had, judging from experience, no conception whatsoever of the future greatness and grandeur of the movement which it was their lot to inaugurate, nor of the real national education and determination requisite for its actors to attain before a lasting government of liberty could be established in Ireland.

The organization was in being over four years before it was publicly agitated to the people, and then only against the express wishes of its original projectors, whose intention was to have it conducted in a similar manner to that of the old secret organizations of Europe.

This system of secrecy was repudiated by the American Fenians at the Chicago Convention in 1863, who said that as Fenianism was a national movement of liberty, it should be discussed publicly before the people. After a few mass meetings had been held, and after the organization had gone through the fiery ordeal of a deadly opposition from a certain class, whose power and influence among the people on past occasions had crushed every national organization, that had for its object Irish independence, or that met with their disapprobation, the Brotherhood became very popular, and thousands joined it

without realizing its requirements, because it was fashionable to be Fenians, and others who are always waiting to take advantage of favored things, entered the ranks with a view of using it for their own political or business aggrandizement.

These two classes who will join every national movement that is sufficiently popular—the one for the sake of custom, and the other for that of gain; were outside of paying their regular weekly dues, which is only one-tenth part of the qualifications of a first class Fenian, almost useless to the Brotherhood, for it requires in its ranks men of earnestness and strong conviction, who will work night and day for the object of their hearts.

However, in this condition, which was natural, considering the state of our people, the organization continued to increase steadily under the man-worshipping Irish chieftainism of a few leaders, who used to write letters weekly to the circles, telling them that "something mysterious was on the tapis," and to ask no questions, but to work and trust all to them. In this way the organization was lead superstitiously by exaggerated statements until the fall of 1865, when the Senate of the Fenian Brotherhood had the manliness, notwithstanding the known sacrifice for a time, to depose the Executive for flagrantly violating the Constitution.

This act of the Senate, although condemned by many at the time, in deposing the Executive and thereby establishing the movement on principle and national intelligence, will yet appear on the page of history as the fore-runner of Irish independence.

After the split, the deposed Head Centre squandered the funds of the Brotherhood, by employing a host of military officers to take up his fallen cause, and give dignity to his establishment. So the funds, although squandered, were expended under a regular system, without materially benefiting any one, for when O'Mahoney was deposed he had not money enough to buy his breakfast. Selfishness, love for power, and incompetency constituted O'Mahoney's defects.

The opposition between both parties was very strong until after the Campo Bello failure, when some of the circles remained neutral, and others adhered to Roberts and the Senate, with the understanding that they should commence the fight *at once*. Roberts finding this feeling of impatience for quick results existing in the Brotherhood, was forced to accept the late Canadian movement with one hundred and twenty thousand dollars, the most of which was contributed by himself and the Senate, and with only a few months preparation, or let the organization go down. So Gen. O'Neil crossed the border, and although he had to return again for the want of proper supplies, yet Irish independence is to date from the battle of Lime Stone Ridge, for it afforded a rallying point to reorganize both the civil and military departments of the Brotherhood on the basis of a purely national, educated Republican liberty.

The late movement in Ireland, although premature and not in the right place to commence, has had the same effect of creating a greater determination among us to prosecute untiringly our holy work.

Undoubtedly we have had our traitors and must continue to have them until our duty is done; for it would be singular if Ireland—a country in slavery over seven hundred years—would not have national traitors when America the land of liberty has had them in all her struggles.

Traitors cannot effectually betray a cause of righteousness, based on intelligence and determination, for Heaven is always on the side of justice.

When I look over the past history of the Fenian Brotherhood, and see the trials and obstacles we had to contend against, together with the split in our ranks nearly two years ago, and compare it with our present healthy standing, working under one head the world over; I feel that the hand of Divine Providence has afflicted us with these trials, for the purpose of putting us through the trying ordeal of a national purification. For had Fenianism triumphed with the man-worshipping superstitious element which predominated in it two years ago, it would be simply abolishing one despotism for the purpose of establishing another.

In reviewing the organization and considering the feeling and standing of the present members of the Brotherhood, even five years ago, seeing them then not knowing how to conduct the business of the Circles properly—and looking up to every other countryman as their superior in everything, save street and bar-room fights, and the lowest grades of labor; and indifferent to their country except when they would drink a toast to her out of a bottle of whisky, and comparing it with their present temperate, intelligent and forcible work—I am convinced that we have advanced more rapidly, considering our circumstances, than any people in the world during the same length of time.

As a worker in the organization, I am fully compensated for the humble part I have taken by the glorious and brilliant standing of our present United Brotherhood.

How is it that all other national movements inaugurated in Ireland against the British connection, and subjugation of the people, have failed? Simply because all the national movements in Ireland in the past, including that of 1848, were either headed by the Aristocracy or by those who, although disclaiming any connection with the blooded gentry, yet they possessed a feeling of superiority over the people, which told the latter that they—the leaders—were the hereditary chieftains who were going to free Ireland, and again reinherit their feudal mansions.

The people not being taught self-reliance, with the death, imprisonment or treachery of a leader down went the cause. Fenianism on the other hand instead of operating on the surface of the people, like the Irish chieftains in the past, has gone into the very heart of the Irish people, and like a burning sun of light, is there absorbing slowly, but surely, the darkness by which they are surrounded, and gradually elevating them to a correct knowledge of that boon which Heaven has ordained them to enjoy.

"It is the slave who makes the master," and get the Irish people to know their own resources, and that it is an aristocracy consisting of a few thousand who are to-day grinding down to the lowest depths of beastly wretchedness—plunging the murderous dagger into the heart of Erin and causing her children to be butchered as the beast of the field for acting on that holy inspiration which God has given them—love of country.

Get them to know this: that it is the will of this aristocracy, which oppresses over five millions at home, and has stamped with the die of slavery ten millions of the Irish race abroad, and that it causes Irishmen to enter the British army and navy, and thereby oppress themselves.

Tell them, also, that no matter what their talents or wealth may be, so long as an Irish farmer pays out his life's blood to an agent of an English landlord, so long will the Irish people all over the world fall under the British assertion "that the Irish race are an inferior species of the human family, unworthy of liberty."