

Dublin Notes.

(From the National papers.)

THE Government having proclaimed the meeting summoned for Ballycooree on Sunday, September 4, and prohibited all well-disposed people from attending any meeting there or thereabouts, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, M.P.; Mr. John Dillon, M.P.; Mr. William O'Brien, M.P.; Hon. P. Stanhope, M.P.; Mr. J. R. Cox, M.P., with twenty thousand of the inhabitants of Clare, Galway, and Limerick, massed themselves in Ennis on the appointed day. Infantry, cavalry, and the dark-coated members of the R.I.C. were there too to carry out the orders received from the Castle and prevent the dangerous assembly from being constituted. The varied costumes of the troops added a needed bit of colour to the scene, but that was all. While they were gallantly defending the dykes around the Ballycooree race-course against an invader that never turned up, the twenty thousand marched out of Ennis with bands playing and colours flying until they got room to deploy themselves. Then they elected their chairman, proposed their resolutions of allegiance to the "dangerous" National League, and of gratitude to the English democracy and their renowned leader, listened to words of acknowledgment and encouragement from Mr. Stanhope, of defiance from Mr. Dillon, Mr. O'Brien, and the Lord Mayor; and when the Castle troops made their appearance quietly allowed them to pass through and manoeuvre, continuing their meeting until the menace of force came. Then, on the order of Mr. O'Brien, they reformed their procession, and marched back into Ennis with her Majesty's troops bringing up the rear.

It was like the old days again—the days of the "monster meetings," that the present generation only read about or heard about at the grandsire's knee—when, on the Ennis coach-road, as brave a gathering of the manhood and womanhood of Clare as ever assembled asserted the right of free speech against one more Coercion Government. It was a monster meeting if ever there was one. Strapping young farmers' sons on horseback, making a dashing mounted life-guard for the leaders and distinguished visitors; an endless procession of low-backed cars, trundling like a peaceful artillery, laden with mothers and wives and daughters; and hosts and myriads (to use a word now on the "Index" of the House of Commons) on foot, blackening the roads and fields and fences—fifty thousand men and women if there was a soul, with bands playing, flags flying, and eyes flashing with the fire of an undying enthusiasm! And there, cuggered and huddled the Coercionist army on the top of the hill, with

"Shame in the sight of their face,
And fear in the shews of their hand."

It was one of those dramatic spectacles which portray like a sublime tableau the whole story of Ireland's indomitable hope, and strength, and courage, and of her enemies' brutal malice and impotency.

With what object did Mr. Balfour issue his despotic order? If it was for the satisfaction of shutting out the Nationalists from one particular field and obliging them to betake themselves off to a neighbouring one, our only objection is that the achievement was not worth the risk of a massacre. If the proclamation was issued, as it was in the House of Commons defended, on the ground that it was dangerous to the public peace that the Nationalists of Clare should be allowed to assemble in their thousands and to go home strengthened in the doctrines of the National League, then there is not a small boy in Clare who does not know that the proclamation was torn to flitters before the face of Mr. Balfour's flying column. The people assembled from near and far with their bands and colours, and marched in open procession through the town to a rendezvous publicly announced by placard the previous day; the resolutions were submitted, and Mr. Stanhope spoke, without the slightest molestation, although there was an outlying party of police within earshot all the time; Mr. Dillon delivered one of the most fervid speeches ever heard—a speech which occupies nearly a solid column in the same issue of the *Times* in which the editor announces that no meeting was permitted; Mr. O'Brien commenced to speak, went through, and finished, while the flying column was actually halted a few yards off; and the Lord Mayor of Dublin followed him, after which the procession leisurely re-formed, and singing, band-playing, and wild with delight, once more traversed the streets of Ennis, amidst scenes of enthusiasm of which every cabin in Clare will catch the contagion. If that is Mr. Balfour's idea of killing off the effect of a demonstration which, but for his interposition, might have been a common place affair enough, it is not we who need deny him the illusion.

It is the perfect good temper of the people that enrages these Unionists. If they could only get the people to pay their simulacrum of a Government the homage of an assault on one of their dragoons, they would be more than satisfied. A little blood, even if shed in a street-brawl by one of its agents, would make the thing look like a Government. Poor Government! it has ceased to be serious. It has still its paraphernalia of bayonets and batons; but of what avail are they among a people who are so rebelliously contemptible that they will not come to get their heads broken! To see those dangerous Englishmen and Irishmen go down in defiance of the prohibition of her Majesty's Council in Ireland and pass all their dangerous and unlawful resolutions, is bad enough; but to behold an assembly of Irishmen so determinedly peaceful, that though twenty thousand were present it did not produce a single case for the police courts is enough to drive the "authorities" into despair.

Once more the action of the police calls for some public attention. This force continues to do such work in Ireland, and in such a way as no other body of a similar kind could be got to do, we believe, in any country pretending to civilisation. According to their wont, the police in Ennis followed about the streets the musical bands which had come to the town, and it is stated that a couple of drunken persons threw some stones at them. Instead of arresting the offenders, as they should have done, these privileged bullies ferociously attacked

the crowd, and, as usual, a considerable proportion of those whom they levelled with their batons were children and feeble persons. One little boy was injured so badly on the head by a stroke from a truncheon that his life is in danger, and seven or eight other heads came in for hurts more or less serious. Another squad of the same force behaved in a similar disgraceful way in Ballinasloe, on the occasion of the removal of a prisoner to Galway gaol. There was a large crowd, and they exhibited their feelings towards the Marquis of Clanricarde, over whose seizure of the goods of two Ballinasloe shopkeepers the arrest had been made, by shouting and cheering for the "Plan of Campaign." The police on returning were hooted, and this seems to have had a savagely exasperating effect upon their temper. One of them struck a young lad named Ward, son of Mr. Lewis Ward, builder, a fearful blow on the head; and the victim was borne home to his parents in a pool of blood. It is said that the ruffian who did this can be identified, and that he will be proceeded against in some way. So far as punishment is concerned, there is little use in endeavouring to put murderously-disposed policemen within the grasp of justice, as the late case of poor Hanlon only too convincingly shows. But at all events it is some service to show up the perpetrators, that they may receive the condemnation of an unvindicated public.

Mr. Stanhope met a thousand of his constituents from Wednesday, at his residence near Wombourne, at a picnic on Thursday afternoon, September 8, and in a speech full of manly feeling and cordiality detailed his impressions of Irishmen, the Ennis meeting, and the nature of the struggle now going on in Ireland. He showed the identity which exists between the objects of the Irish tenants and those for which the English democracy are struggling, and the necessity for the Irish people to carry on the agitation peaceably and within the law; and his condemnation of the brutality of the Irish policemen—specimens of which he had had ocular proof—must have suggested to the listeners the extreme difficulty of doing this in face of their monstrous provocation. Furthermore, he bore generous testimony to the complete absence of intolerance on the part of Irish Catholics, and their unqualified desire to allow the fullest fair play to their Protestant fellow-countrymen in the settlement of the National question. The speech wound up with a very significant warning against the dangers of what he happily termed "scamping the Irish job"—in other words, giving a niggardly and ungenerous measure of Home Rule. The whole speech is one which stamps the speaker as being one of the broadest-minded Liberals of the day.

It is amusing to watch the exertions of the anti-Irish organs to convince themselves that the authority of Mr. Balfour's proclamation was victoriously asserted at Ennis. They assist themselves by throwing a haze around the whereabouts of the Hill of Ballycooree. The Hill of Ballycooree is an elevation in the northern environs of Ennis; the place where the Nationalists actually met is within a quarter of a mile of the town on the opposite side. The sum and substance of what happened was this:—The police and military undauntedly held the hill, while the Nationalists' bands were playing, banners flying, and speakers delivering themselves, in the hollow. It was as if Hussars and riflemen were to be massed in Trafalgar-square to suppress a demonstration there "or in the neighborhood," while the demonstration was in full blast in Hyde Park.

And how does Mr. Balfour feel? Does he feel like a governor? Does the motor muscle of Irish Government respond to his nervous action? "Obedience," said Burke, "makes a Government." Is Mr. Balfour at the head of a Government, then? We cannot but think he feels the ludicrous position in which he is placed. It is at length beyond the power of a Castle official to prevent free speech in Ireland. That much has been accomplished, anyhow. We have advanced very far beyond the point O'Connell reached. Ballycooree might have been our Clontarf, but we have long since weathered the point in our course at which such an event might have occurred. Let a share of the credit be given to the Englishmen who, true to their traditions, have made it impossible for the Castle safely to crush out in blood the attempts of the people to assert their rights.

One result of the great assemblage which trampled on Mr. Balfour's illegal proclamation will probably be that the Government will proclaim no more meetings. At any rate, if they do, they will be greater fools even than we take them for, and it is not the National League or the Irish people who will have to complain in that case. A Government cannot long hold out against the force of ridicule and contempt which allows itself to be exhibited in such a plight as the proclaimers of the Clare meeting stood in last Sunday. To publish the intention of suppressing a lawful public meeting was an outrage to begin with. It was illegal: the common law gives them no power to suppress such a meeting, and they obtained no such power under their Coercion Act. It was a threat against the public peace; its only effect could be to exasperate a population who, it was admitted by the Government, would otherwise have met and dispersed in perfect order. This was bad enough. But to proclaim the meeting and then to stand foolishly and impotently by while the meeting was being held in multiplied proportions a couple of hundred yards off was to crown brutality with idiocy. The quick perception and marvellous self-control of the people utterly foiled and outwitted the Government, while at the same time it was these qualities alone that averted a bloody catastrophe. It was the case over again of the cowardly assassin Government, without the courage of its criminal intentions, "willing to wound, but afraid to strike," fingering its firearms but in terror of using them. This time their terror has a double inspiration, the marshalled might of the Irish people in front, and in the rear the awakened public opinion of England. It is hardly likely, we think, that after Sunday's experience they will challenge the Ennis test again. If they do, we shall know it is because they have been struck with that madness with which the gods, according to the proverb, afflict those whom they wish to destroy, for nothing could better suit the book of the Irish people at the present moment than a series of proclaimed meetings on the Ballycooree pattern all over the country.

It is not often that one gets a refutation so complete and crushing as that which Mr. Mulhall administered to Mr. Balfour. Mr. Mulhall is one of the most eminent statisticians living, and proved his eminence a short time ago by giving so distinguished a figurist as Mr. Giffin, a