

Dublin Notes.

(From the National papers.)

ON Friday evening, March 8, in the House of Commons, the Irish members succeeded in completing the chain of evidence which proves the complicity of the Government with the *Times*. It will be remembered that the charge was made long since, that members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and other officials of the Irish Office, were engaged in the service of the *Times* in connection with the Commission. Mr. Balfour quibbled in his usual style, and the truth could not be forced from him. But when the scene of operations was transferred to England, the protecting shield of Mr. Balfour's talent for equivocation was withdrawn, and the *modus operandi* became plain. Head-Constable Preston is one of the constabulary officers kept constantly in London in the service of the *Times* since the opening of the Commission, his salary, of course, being provided by the Irish people. His unsolicited visits to a prisoner named Tracy, at Millbank, came to the knowledge of the Irish members, and they sought information from Mr. Balfour as to whom he was acting for. Mr. Balfour roundly declared his ignorance, and stated his belief that he was acting in his own capacity. But on Friday, the interesting fact was elicited from Mr. Mathews—who, although a lawyer, is not by any means Mr. Balfour's equal at lying-fence—that the application for permission to visit Millbank came from Mr. Soames. So it is established now that the Irish police, though in the pay of the Irish people, are in the service of the "Forger."

The magisterial investigation into the circumstances of the murder of Inspector Martia, began on Thursday, March 7, at Letterkenny. The conduct of the police during the preliminary stage, has been such as to justify the anxiety of the public in connection with the trial. On Thursday the prisoners were paraded before the police witnesses for identification, and the witnesses compared notes as the accused passed into the court. This proceeding was so scandalous that it was condemned even by Removable Hamilton. In his cross-examination of the policemen on Friday, Dr. Houston elicited the information that on the preceding evening, a statement of the evidence had been read out for them by an officer. These incidents are sufficiently indicative of the spirit with which the police have entered upon the making of the case. If the Crown lawyers transfer the *venue* to Fermanagh, as they did in the trial of the Falcarragh prisoners, and pack the jury as well and truly as in that instance, their success in the pursuit of Father McFadden's life is assured.

The Liberal Federation of Ely held a conference, week ending March 9, in that town under the presidency of Sir Walter Foster.—This conference was followed in the evening by a public meeting in the Corn Exchange, at which Sir William Harcourt addressed a very large and enthusiastic concourse of people on the Irish question. Law and order, said the right hon. baronet, would be established in Ireland, but not under coercion. The Irish people, he continued, had survived Cromwell, and they would survive Balfour. Now that the letters attributed to Mr. Parnell had been proved forgeries, the Commission might drag on as a matter of antiquarian research. Sir William expressed himself thoroughly satisfied with the present promising outlook of things from a Home Rule point of view.

Sir Charles Russell was among the prominent public men who spoke at the Hackney Reform Club on Monday evening, March 11. Speaking of the Irish party, the hon. baronet said that the Irish Parliament preceded England by twenty-five years in striving for Catholic Emancipation. That was a Parliament exclusively Protestant—not merely composed solely of Protestant members, but elected solely by Protestant votes. According to the then state of Irish representation, Ireland spoke with a divided voice; but when Ireland had a free choice of popularly electing its representatives, then Ireland no longer spoke with a divided voice. When out of one hundred popularly elected representatives eighty-five were returned to the Imperial Parliament speaking the same language, it became impossible for any constitutional Minister to disregard the cry which it sent forth. No Government, he maintained, could long exist if it had not got behind it the moral sanction and support of the people whom it governed; for never let it be forgotten that there was one article of faith at the bottom of the whole Liberal and Radical creed, and that was that kingships, republics, and any other form of government were not created for the sake of kings—they were not created for the sake of the Government—and that the true relation of the Executive to the people was not the condition of master and servant, but that the Executive were, or ought to be, in a normal condition of things, accountable to the people whom they governed.

The meeting of the Eighty Club on Friday, March 8, was one of those events that sometimes close a long political development fittingly and somewhat dramatically. Earl Spencer was the guest of the evening. Mr. Parnell was one of the invited visitors, and the proceedings were opened by the meeting of those two men whose lives have had such influence, from opposite directions, on the latter-day history of Ireland. Mr. Parnell's greeting to Earl Spencer was an act in which he might well be taken as representing the whole Irish nation. Lord Spencer's administration of Irish affairs was criticised unsparingly and fought unflinchingly by the Irish people. But the bitterness of the criticism and the unhesitating character of the resistance were largely due to the fact that the people and the leaders felt that the policy of coercion was getting its last honest trial, and that if it failed in Earl Spencer's hands, and under the conditions then and now existing, it failed for ever. The great-mindedness of his subsequent action has not been lost on the people of Ireland, and they endorse every word spoken by their leaders in recognition of Lord Spencer's magnanimity.

Lord Spencer made the reasons for his conversion to Home Rule perfectly plain in the portion of his speech where he recapitulated his experiences of Ireland. The Act of Union had failed because of three things; first, the non-fulfilment of the promises which were made at its passing; second, unjust legislation; and third, ill-considered legislation. The demand of Ireland is, he declared, justified by

history; and not only by the history of old times, but by the history of recent date. He was not ashamed to say that he had changed his opinions with regard to the Irish question, and to acknowledge that he was formerly wrong. He was wrong for one thing in believing that the men who spoke in Ireland's name were noisy agitators; but the general election of 1886 had convinced him of his error there, an error he was beginning dimly to perceive even before that event. Mr. Gladstone's Bills, he declared, were not dead. Their grand principles lived, and would yet vivify an Act of Parliament.

Baron Dowse opened the assizes at Tralee on Monday, March 11, and delivered a fierce political diatribe on boycotting and on the destiny of the money saved from the landlords. He seems to have been anxious to console the coercionists for the sneer which he aimed at the expectant heir of his lordship's dignity—Mr. Peter O'Brien—in a speech at Limerick. We regret that pressure of business compelled the Baron, who is generally witty and original, to unearth an old speech of Mr. T. W. Russell for the occasion. Really, though the house of Dowse has lately taken to chumming with Liberal Unionists of that temper, we did not imagine it would so soon have to borrow its ideas. But so it is. And the Baron has revived the stale, old contentions of the Unionist platforms that murder is the sanction of boycotting, and that if rents are reduced it is only to swell the whisky account. The Baron made great use of figures in his speech; but in figures is his judgment writ. When Mr. Balfour made up his statistics of boycotting, the highest total from the province of Leinster was supplied by the County Kilkenny, which equalled any county in Ireland in its criminal love of the social remedy for land-grabbing. But there has not been a single murder in Kilkenny during the whole period since the Land League was started there. The Baron's deduction is from the increase of one hundred and four cases in the police statistics; but whether they were Emergency men, *Times'* witnesses, corner-boys, or farmers who had their rents reduced, the statistics did not show, nor did the dispenser of justice inquire. Perhaps it would have spoiled his harangue, and the Baron never spoils either a joke or a harangue by a too close adherence to the truth.

We wonder if Cullinane, the notorious Balfourian *factotum*, is still playing his devilish tricks in the County Clare, or have the Removables themselves got up a little crime in order to afford them an opportunity of sending innocent Nationalists to gaol and expounding moral maxims on the political situation from the bench? Whether it be Cullinane or his superiors in the hierarchy, it is certain that an active attempt is being now made to give the County Clare a bad name. It is, for instance, announced from Limerick that Mr. Creagh, a landlord, residing near Quin, County Clare, was driving with his sister to church on last Sunday, when he was fired at and badly wounded, while his sister was shot in the face. Strange to say, no arrests have as yet been made. The police are too busy with the "suppressed leaguers" to have any time for the prevention or detection of real crime.

Sir William Harcourt made an exceedingly good point when he said that since the last general election some sixty-seven vacancies took place in the House of Commons, out of which ten seats changed political hands, with the result that of these ten the Liberal party won nine and lost only one. Sixty-seven seats being exactly one-tenth of the House of Commons, and ten times nine being ninety, ninety seats mean one hundred and eighty votes in a division, "and when," said the hon. baronet, "we have to get ten times nine votes, which is one hundred and eighty on a division, where will her Majesty's Government be?" The election of Kennington, according to the speaker, like the battle of Gravelotte, only precedes the disaster of Sedan. "We must give the Government party no rest," he added; "we must give them no quarter." Having alluded to the ignominious conspiracy existing between the Government and the *Times*, proved by the assistance rendered the latter journal by policemen and other officials, Sir William said that the Liberal party would no longer allow the Cabinet to skulk behind a majority—a majority which, he justly observed, has been obtained upon false promises, false representations, and broken pledges. "We will," he continued, "drag them before the nation's tribunal." Later on, in acknowledging several addresses, the orator said that there should be no man wanting to precipitate the final issue which will allow the people of England to pronounce the fate of a Coercion Government. Sir William's speech was couched in the happiest terms, and was much relished by the audience, particularly the passage in which he compared the Liberal Unionists to the petty potentates of the old German Confederation, ninety-nine out of a hundred of whom were colonels or captains, and only one a full private. Apart from its satirical humour, Sir William's utterance had a ring of enthusiastic hope in it which proves that the chiefs of the Liberal party are more than conscious of the fact that victory is at last alighting on the Home Rule banner.

Sir George Trevelyan, in addressing a Radical meeting at Islington, pointed out that though the diminution of the Government majority was caused mainly by the bye-elections, everyone who knew what electioneering was was aware that Liberal triumphs were gained almost always amidst the heat and excitement of a general election, and that it was bye-elections that ordinarily went against them. Sir George, in his remarks on the turn of the tide in London, was very nappy and effective. Referring to Glasgow he said he did not believe that at the next general election it would return a single supporter of the present Government. The hon. baronet, in conclusion, denied Lord Salisbury's assertion that the agrarian question was at the bottom of Home Rule—contending, and with justice, that the national feeling in Ireland was as strong in the towns as it was in the country, and that, if the agrarian question were to be disposed of by Mr. Balfour, the feeling for Home Rule would be as strong as ever, for it rested upon the desire of Irishmen to take part in the government of their country.

Mr. Chamberlain's Liberal Unionist supporters are throwing up the sponge at last, and are trying to build themselves a bridge whereby they may return to the Liberal fold. At a meeting of that body on Tuesday, March 12, in West Birmingham, a resolution was unanimously adopted in favour of immediate legislation for Ireland on the land question and local government. This is the first sign of