

## GLADSTONE'S ARRAIGNMENT OF PARNELL.

I WILL 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 (cheer-). O'Connell professed unconditional and unswerving loyalty to the Crown of England. Mr. Parnell says that 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 quoting his words—is a matter on which he has not, I believe, given any opinion whatsoever, (hear, hear). O'Connell desired friendly relations with the people of this country—cordial, 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 (laughter). I don't believe him to be a profound political economist (hear, hear), but it may have occurred to his mind that it may be rather difficult for the Irish people to provide themselves in a short time 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 articles yourselves, you must buy them from foreign countries, but whatever you do you must not buy them from England" (shame). I say, gentlemen, I think you will begin to perceive that in the strong language that I have used to describe the position of affairs in Ireland I am not wholly without justification (hurrah), and when I proceed to say that, whereas friendship with England was the motto of O'Connell, hostility to England and to Scotland is the motto and avowed principle of Mr. Parnell. O'Connell on every occasion declared his respect for property and as far as I know, consistently maintained it. What says Mr. Parnell upon the subject? Well, months ago he told the people of Ireland that they ought to pay no rents which they had covenanted to pay—that, whether they were able or not able to do so, they were under no obligation to pay those rents, but they must pay rents according to the views which were set down in Griffith's valuation—a valuation much below the value in by far the greater number of cases, framed for a different purpose. In fact, the announcement amounted to this, that they were themselves to substitute an arbitrary standard of payment for the standard to which they had themselves individually agreed. Now the Land Act has passed into law, and now that Mr. Parnell is afraid lest the people of England, by their long-continued efforts, should win the hearts of the whole of the Irish nation, he has now a new and enlarged gospel of plunder to proclaim. He says that, whereas the rental of Ireland is seventeen 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 seventeen millions, but possibly about three millions of money. I ask you 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 this kind in any words more just than the promulgation of the gospel of sheer plunder. The next of the five points was respect of law and human life. But I think O'Connell was consistent, and I believe he was unimpeachable. Mr. Parnell is very copious in his references to America. He has said America is the only friend of Ireland, but in all his references to America he has never found time to utter one word of disapproval of 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 spurn 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 to point out, 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 individuals that they are pleased to select ought to be made the objects of the knife of the assassin, and deprived of life because they don't conform to the new Irish gospel (shame). 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 the explosion; the death of another was expected, but I believe was averted; and Mr. Parnell, the gentleman to whom I refer, said that that occurrence in Salford appeared to him to be in the character of a practical joke (shame). Now, I go along point by point, and I come finally to this. Whenever a measure was passed with a good intent for Ireland, O'Connell accepted the measure, however short it might fall of what he thought Ireland was entitled to claim. Have the present candidates for the leadership—for I will not call them leaders (cheers)—and that is just the question which has yet to be decided—have the candidates for the leadership of the people of Ireland acted upon that principle? How has he met us during the last session? With every effort to disparage, to discredit, and, if he could, to destroy the Land Bill. But he did not dare to go beyond a certain point; he did not dare to vote against the bill like a man (loud cheering), because he knew that if he did his own Land League in Ireland would rise in a body against him (cries of hear, hear). When the Tories—unfortunately, as I think—determined to oppose the bill on the second reading, and when the life of that bill was at stake, Mr. Parnell, with about thirty of his followers, withdrew from the House, thus endeavouring indirectly to destroy the work we had begun, and so defeat the arduous efforts we had made (hear, hear). Gentlemen, on every subsequent occasion the same policy was pursued. And now what does Mr. Parnell say? I believe that the people of Ireland, and this is a matter which the next few weeks or months will have to determine, desire, in accordance with the advice of their old friends, their bishops, and trusted friends, to make a full trial of the Land Act (hear, hear). And, gentlemen, if they do you may rely upon it that it will give peace to the country—peace which is not the object of these men; and therefore in the prosecution of their policy the very thing which is most of all what is necessary for them to do is to intercept the progress of the Land Act. And how do they set about it? Mr. Parnell, with his myrmidons around him, in his Land League meetings in Ireland, has instructed 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 justice. They are not to go into the court until he gives them leave (laughter). He says they are not to

go there until he has framed certain test cases, and until he and the president of the Land League have taken these test cases into the court. What does he mean by test cases. I will tell you what he means; it is perfectly plain that he means to take into court cases of rents which are fair and moderate rents. That court is established to administer equal justice, and not to obey the behests of Mr. Parnell (loud cheers). If Mr. Parnell, under the name of test cases, carries before the court moderate and fair rents, of which there are so many in Ireland (hear, hear), the court will reject the application, and when the court has rejected the application Mr. Parnell and his train will tell the Irish nation that they have been betrayed, that the court is worthless, and that the Land Act ought to meet with their unequivocal repudiation; and so he will play his game and gain his object if the people of Ireland should listen to his fatal doctrine, because, gentlemen, you know as well as I do that the Parliament of this country is not going to overturn the principles of public right and public order (cheers), and I think you also know, what I fully believe, 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 case is unjust, in a just case are invincible (applause). 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 his latest declarations he has said—pray observe his words—"We propose to test the Land Act, not use it." Well, but a fair test of an Act is to use it (cheers). What is said is this, "You must not use it, you must test it; you must apply to it, and test it and bring to light the disposition of the court upon the doctrine which has now been promulgated—that the rental of Ireland, which is stated to be seventeen millions, is to be reduced to three millions to satisfy just claims" (cheers). Now I think I am not wrong in speaking of this as a case of the utmost gravity (hear, hear). I have spoken very strongly, but I have carefully striven to avoid exaggeration (cheers). I have indeed pondered on every word I have used. There is another misfortune in Ireland besides the fact that for the first time in our history these degrading and immoral doctrines are taught by men of education and men of respectable station to their social inferiors—and the other unhappy fact is the traditional sluggishness and incapability of the healthier portion of society in Ireland to do anything whatever for themselves. I hope there will be a change in this respect; I am sure it is necessary. I will give you yet one more brief quotation from one 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 warn his countrymen or to condemn the statements made by Mr. Parnell." There has been no meeting of any importance, no movement of any importance, and no expression of opinion in support of public law and public order. The upper class, 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 to denounce the evil. A general cowardice seems to prevail among all the classes who possess property, and the Government is expected to preserve the peace with no moral force behind it. We are convinced that the Irish nation desire to take free and real 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 seventeen 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, then he will endeavour further to work his will by attempting to procure from the Irish people a repudiation of the Act. He says that until he has submitted his test cases any farmer who pays his rent is a fool. It is a dangerous thing for a man to be denounced in Ireland as a fool by the head of the most violent party in the country, and it must afford the greatest temptation to misdeeds. It is no small matter if he desires to arrest the operation of the Act to stand as Moses stood, between the living and the dead; but he stands there, not as Moses stood, to arrest, but to spread the plague (loud cheers). These opinions, gentlemen, are called forth by the grave state of the facts. I do not give them to you as anything more than opinions, but they are opinions sustained by references to words and to actions; they all have reference to this great impending crisis, in which we depend on 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 so far as it is in our power to decide the question, prevent the Irish people from having the full and free benefit of the Land Act. And if, when we have had that short further experience to which I have referred, it should appear that there is still to be fought the final conflict in Ireland between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness on the other—if the law purged from defect and any taint of injustice, is still to be violated, and the first condition of political society to remain unfulfilled, then I say, gentlemen, without any hesitation, the resources of civilisation will not yet be exhausted [cheers] I shall recognise in full, when facts are ripe—and their ripeness is approaching—the duty and the responsibility of the Government [cheers]. I call upon all orders and degrees of men in these two kingdoms—in these three kingdoms—to support the Government in discharging its duty [cheers]; and in acquitting itself of its responsibility. And 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 (loud and prolonged cheering).

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