

people; her sufferings, persecution, and mis-government—the occasion might well evoke powers of oratory to which he could have no pretension. Thomas Francis Meagher artistically summarised it thus:—Ruins, blossoms, sterility, vegetation, storms, silence, vitality, desolate repose—such the history of Ireland—such the character of the people by whom that history has been written. But speaking more in relation to the political condition of the country, Mr Tole said any historian who described (however violently) the “conquest, confiscation, persecution, famine, and oppression” would faithfully register the nation’s annals. He referred to the Coercion Acts—one for every year nearly since the union, and to the present position of Ireland in relation to her claims for self-government, and the state of her tenantry. He detailed the annual cost of controlling the population of Ireland under the present coercive system (the half of which would be saved under Home Rule) viz., the army, £2,250,000; military police, £1,500,000; the “Castle,” £70,000; Judges and staff, £250,000; stipendiary magistrates and Crown solicitors, £40,000; soldiers, police and prison officials, £150,000; Crown Prosecutors and Crown solicitors, £80,000; spies and informers (informers’ home), £50,000, and public buildings for use of the “Castle,” in all amounting to £4,845,000 annually, which proved the absolute failure in any true sense of government, and also proved that any government would be a failure when it was maintained by powder, bayonets, and crowbars, and not supported by the will, sentiments, and aspirations of the Irish people. This was the moral force which constituted the essential object of the Association. They had as yet, no particulars of the constitution and objects, rules, etc., of the parent organisation, but its aims were manifest. They were to promote the happy solution of the Irish question by the attainment of self-government, and to that end, to awaken a national sentiment, which was always a powerful addition to principle. He (Mr Tole) did not for one moment suppose that this association was intended for purposes of conviviality or possessing any features of mere entertainment. There were of course, elements of pleasantry in every society, however stern and solid the aims and objects, but these should be remotely incident, and not by any means prominent elements—destroying the character and *raison d’être* of the movement. Proceeding, Mr Tole said that there were noble hearts, bright intellects, and powerful tongues in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, struggling to further the cause of Ireland’s regeneration. This new organisation looks across the Southern Ocean to Ireland’s exiles to give support to the cause. Scotland was also now rousing her people abroad to a sense of their national rights, and was invoking the moral and pecuniary aid of Scotsmen in the colonies to render assistance in their struggle for self-government. He (Mr Tole) had received a circular from the Scottish Home Rule Association, and this is the vigorous language in which they appeal to the Scot abroad:—“To many Englishmen Scotland has no separate existence but as that part of England which lies north of the Tweed. England is Britain. All is English. It is the English army—the English navy—the English Government—the English people. In this attempt are made at every bye-election to fasten Englishmen upon Scottish constituencies as their representatives. The attempt has proved successful in too many instances, and, as might have been expected, Scottish grievances, financial, social, and political, are tamely submitted to by the representatives of Scotland, who if they were true Scotsmen would stand for their like men for their country. Our Scottish nationality is in danger of being extinguished, and an ancient kingdom merged into the northern counties of England.” They then point out how this national spirit is to be fostered. “To arouse our people to a sense of their danger, and form a National Party independent of political bias, and strong enough to secure our freedom, we must adopt a comprehensive plan of education. We must circulate literature, hold public meetings, deliver lectures.” As showing the progress that the question of Home Rule for Scotland has attained in the House of Commons, it is interesting to note as the circular mentions, “We have a regular dealer in the House of Commons and a growing party. At the last division in the House on this subject, on the 20th of March 1890, 141 members voted for, as against 279 who voted against Home Rule for Scotland.” Mr Tole said he could not refrain from reading to them the eloquent appeal which concluded this circular, it was so stirring and truly patriotic. “Scotsmen, do you love your country? we know you do! Are the name and fame of this nursery of brave men to be extinguished? Colonists, we have sent you strong men with strong brains, and they have made their mark wherever they have gone—can you do without them, will the world be richer or poorer by the extinction of Scottish nationality? Brave people never survive their honour, and Scotland transformed into the northern counties of England would be a sorry sight. Yet there are statesmen who dare to work for such an ignoble end, and who would close our history, blot out our institutions, and leave us to the scorn and contempt of the world. Oh! for the spirit of the brave heroes of old who said, ‘While there are a hundred Scotsmen alive we will never submit to England.’” He (Mr Tole) said there was a time when the voices of Irishmen scattered over the world had no force, owing to the insuperable barrier of distance, and the consequent ignorance of passing political events at Home,

referred to the closer bond of union between Irish hearts in the colonies and the mother country, arising from the rapid progress of civilisation, the spread of literature and easy intercommunication, whereby colonists have readily responded to Ireland’s necessities, and pronounced a panegyric upon Australia and New Zealand, where, with a salubrious and productive climate and free institutions, the democratic principle of equality had struck deep, and had raised a happy and prosperous people. Irish statesmen had recognised this, and hence the visits of Dillon and others to these colonies, who, by their clear and moderate speeches had impressed the people of the colonies with the justice of their case, and while by their calm and temperate statements breaking down the barriers of prejudice and ignorance, had taken away the conviction that Irishmen in the colonies had demonstrated their qualifications and fitness for self-government, thus fulfilling Gratian’s words of faith in the popular cause:—“I would trust any people with the custody of its own liberties. I would trust no people with the custody of liberties other than its own.” And this and kindred associations conducted on acknowledged constitutional principles, emphasised the irrefutable argument that Irishmen the world over possessed the inherent qualifications to legislate for themselves and to administer their own affairs. It was the re-organisation of Ireland’s political institutions, that was the main goal of her national aspirations. Land bills, compensation bills, land purchase bills, etc., were all very good, but they were simply remote, radiatory forces connected with the great end, Home Rule. Mr Tole said he had spoken of the moral force in the colonies, and asked them to reflect what was the extent of this force, what was this power? He would first quote from Mulhall’s “Fifty years of Natural progress,” from which it was melancholy to notice that the reign of our present Queen as regards Ireland “has been the most disastrous since that of Elizabeth,” the statistics showing that since 1837, no less than 1,225,000 died of famine, and 3,668,000 persons were evicted. Mulhall goes on to say that “no country either in Europe or elsewhere has suffered such wholesale extermination.” Now, as to the power of Irishmen abroad generally, that was shown by their number and wealth. The number and wealth of Irishmen out of Ireland showed that there were as many millions of Irishmen out of as in Ireland, and possessing nearly seven hundred millions sterling of wealth, Australasia and New Zealand alone possessing 750,000 Irishmen with a wealth of £140,000,000. As Mulhall said, “existing Irish settlements abroad and the estimated wealth in their possession show that the bulk of the emigrants were good citizens of thrift and industrious habits.” All this showed that we, in the colonies, were a source of moral and material support to the cause of the land from which a colonial Irish writer has been exiled. Mr Tole went on to say that they were on the eve of a political crisis at Home, a general election, that coercion would soon be dead. Even up till recently as Parnell has said “no Government, whether it be Tory or Liberal when it gets into office will have the same feeling towards Ireland, and there is no use in drawing a distinction between any of them. They will all coerce you if they can, and they will all pass measures of coercion when they must.” But under the altered circumstances, and with the desire to obtain office on one side, and maintain it on the other, a more attractive Irish policy would be propounded by the respective great English parties, and the Conservatives would probably vie with the Liberals in offering an advanced and acceptable Home Rule measure. The essential significance of colonial support was that we were subjects of the empire. Irishmen in America were regarded in a different light. They were open to the malicious stigma of being either rebels or at least exiles in a foreign land. But such could not be said of Irishmen who were British colonists. In this sense we were akin to the English, Scotch, and Welsh supporters of the Irish question, who were the strong hope of the cause, a hope whose realisation was assured, as it was the closing pledge in the life of Gladstone. Mr Tole concluded by wishing success to the new organisation, which in union with the other colonial organisations would demonstrate to whatever Government would be in power that Her Majesty’s subjects though 16,000 miles away view the Irish question from an impartial standpoint, and by their firm and intelligent support and sympathy make them realise the fact that they can no longer withhold the just claims of Ireland when expressed by the universal voice of her race.

Mr Napier then read from “Subjects of the Day” an able article by Gladstone entitled “An Appeal to the Tory Householder.”

The Secretary, Mr Michael Sheehan, announced that ten new members had been enrolled in the Association that evening.

Mr W. J. Spight gave notice to move at the next meeting certain resolutions expressing regret at the death of Mr Parnell, and also relating to the present position of the Irish party.

Cardinal Lavignerie, who is staying for his health in the Pyrenean district of Cambo, his birthplace, preparing a long memorandum addressed to the Chambers on the Anti-Savery question, in which he strenuously urges the Chamber to reconsider its position on the right of examining ships’ papers in the Indian Ocean, and to ratify the Act of Brussels.