

Then came a solitary figure crossing the snow of the garden. Blanche looked down, and saw it quite plainly.

"Poor old woman! Has she nowhere to go in and go to bed. On Christmas night, too! How cold she must be,

(Concluded in our next.)

LORD SALISBURY ON IRELAND.

THE Prime Minister, addressing a Primrose meeting in London on Friday May 6, spoke as follows:—

They were dealing with a proposal for organic change which would rend the United Kingdom in sunder, place a hostile island on our flank, and subject to infinite damage and disgraceful abandonment those who in Ireland had ever fought for their cause (cheers). Those were issues which concerned the future of the Empire and its present honour. The conflict between classes was shutting out from men's view the great issue of the integrity of the Empire. In other countries if a great organic change was proposed there was always some means of ascertaining whether the nation was willing that the fundamental alteration should take place (hear, hear). It was not so in this country. Elections took place on several issues mixed up. Some people would vote for disestablishment, some on the Eight Hours Bill, and some on the integrity of the empire, and there were no means of distinguishing between their verdicts. It was often said that they were appealing to the verdict of the country; but could they imagine three trials taking place at once before the same jury, a trial for murder, a trial for libel, and a trial for a patent case, the jury only being allowed to say yes or no in one verdict, and that that verdict was to affect all the three cases (laughter and cheers)? That was exactly the process by which the verdict was to be pronounced upon the organic institutions of this country. He did not say it would be a final verdict. He had been taken to task because he had indicated that there were other parts of the constitution which might in certain contingencies be called into action (cheers), but though he hoped and believed that any such possibility was far distant, he thought the strange anomalous condition of things by which they could not ask a plain question to those who had to decide their destinies thoroughly justified the precaution which the constitution had happily taken against hasty or subversive decisions (cheers). Six years ago, before the last dissolution, when the Conservatives were in opposition, they were pretty well agreed that two things were necessary for the pacification of Ireland. One was a generous and enlightened consideration of her material wants, giving those openings to industry which might restore prosperity to the stricken portion of her population (cheers). The other was a firm, impartial, continuous administration of the law so that industrious men might know that their industry might be protected, and that they might safely invest their labour and money in the works of peace (cheers). After six years they asked whether their promises had not been fulfilled (cheers). The measures that had been taken for opening up and relieving the distressed districts of Ireland were, by consent of all, broad, liberal, and effective. The administration of the law had been so impartial and steady that the spirit of disorder had cowered before the spirit of law, and peace was now so restored to Ireland that the crime of boycotting simply did not exist (cheers). These measures had so completely effected their object that people thought that no further precautions were necessary; but unfortunately there were men who were resolved to undo that work, and place the spirit of lawlessness above the spirit of law (shame). They had, undoubtedly, a serious battle to fight. Mr Parnell, their most formidable opponent, had been removed, and since then Ireland seemed to resemble very much the conflicts between a portion of that country and of this island, which had unhappily existed for many generations past. On the other hand, the opinion of the loyalists was unabated and unchanged, and all the hopes that were held out to them that the result of bringing the present Opposition into power might be the disestablishment of the English Church were not sufficient to reconcile them to a change that would be a change from a condition of security and peace to a condition of constant danger and peril (cheers). Had Ulster changed? On the contrary, the conviction of its danger appeared to increase every year, and he knew no symptom more menacing than the opinion which had lately been put forward by the Ulster leaders apparently with full sincerity and full conviction of the responsibility which they involved. Mr Morley asked what did they dread—the thumbscrews and the rack? They dreaded being put under the foot of their hereditary and irreconcilable enemies (cheers). He had been accused because he held this opinion of attacking the Roman Catholic religion. Nothing was further from his intention (cheers), and he never used a word which could fairly be twisted to that sense (cheers). He utterly declined to recognise the inhabitants of the south-eastern portion of Ireland as typical members of the Roman Catholic Church (cheers), and he was justified in saying so, because the head of the Roman Catholic Church had strongly condemned the immoral agencies by which the agitators of Ireland had striven to succeed (cheers). He (Lord

Salisbury) had condemned, and he would always condemn those who, holding high spiritual authority, used their weapons for purely secular objects in which no spiritual concerns existed (cheers). Men who did that inflicted a dangerous wound upon civil society and fastened a profound stain upon the spiritual weapons which they used (cheers). What the Ulster people had to dread was being put under the despotism of their foes. It must be remembered that everything that Ulstermen held dear would be in the hands of Dr Walsh and his political friends. All the wealth which they had produced, all their commerce, all their flourishing agriculture, all the circumstances which distinguished them from the rest of Ireland would be at the mercy of the majority over whom no check would exist. Was not that a terrible fate to which to condemn any men? Was not that a terrible reward for that fidelity to British connections which these men above all had exhibited (cheers). That was not merely a speculative matter. The Ulster people knew the fate that was in store for them, and they had made up their minds to meet it. He had heard many bitter and severe things said of them because they did not show unlimited submission to the possible determination of some future Parliament on this subject. He had been very much edified at the doctrine of passive obedience which had flowed so freely from the orthodox Liberal lips. He was a Tory (loud cheers), but still he could not accept in all their width these doctrines of unrestricted passive obedience. He believed that the title of kings and parliaments to the obedience of their subjects was that those kings and parliaments should observe the fundamental laws and the fundamental understandings of the compact by which they ruled (hear, hear). Parliament had the right to govern the people of Ulster, but it had no right to sell them into slavery (loud cheers). He did not believe in the unrestricted power of parliaments any more than he did in the unrestricted power of kings. James II, stepped outside the limits of the spirit of the constitution, and they knew how the people of Ulster met him. If a similar abuse of power on the part of a parliament or a king should ever occur at any future time he did not believe the people of Ulster had lost their sturdy love of freedom or their detestation of arbitrary power. Whether the Ulstermen would choose to put themselves against the rest of Ireland, whether if they did so they would succeed was a matter for their consideration, but he could not help seeing in the language of those who heralded that approaching change a belief that the military force of England would be employed to subject the people of Ulster to Dr Walsh and his political friends. Political prophecy was always uncertain, but he thought he might venture to prophecy that any attempt on the part of any Government to perpetuate such an outrage as this would rend our society in two. But those were speculations. What a terrible picture the fact that they had to enter into those considerations at all unfolded; a terrible division in the Empire that had hitherto presented such a united front to the world. They called it a message of peace to Ireland. It was a message of religious civil war, and they must look at their share in the matter, and see how far they were responsible for that civil war being brought about. Mr Morley told them that he laughed at the idea that the British electorate might be effected by such fears. He might be right, but he (Lord Salisbury) was quite sure that unless the members of the Primrose League exerted themselves to prevent that hideous picture becoming a reality they would bring about a result which would not secure Home Rule to Ireland—many, many years of conflict would have to pass before that could be the case—but they would bring about a state of things which would destroy the credit and enfeeble the power of England in every quarter of the world (loud cheers during which the noble lord resumed his seat).

Sir William Harcourt, speaking at Bristol on May 10, made this reply:—Within the last few days the Prime Minister of England has had the opportunity of placing before the people of the United Kingdom the policy upon which he means to appeal to the nation. What is there in the speech? There is one single topic, one simple watchword, and it is this—let Ulster rebel (shame). What a statesman, what a policy, what a party, what a future for Ireland of misery, and for England a disgrace! Lord Salisbury's is a Tory policy. It is the watchword of religious bigotry (hear, hear), of class combination, of exclusive privileges (hear, hear), of race hatred, and of insolent ascendancy (applause). This policy is conceived in the spirit which for generations has been the curse of Ireland and the shame of England (cheers). It is the language and the policy which has made British rule naturally odious and justly offensive to the great majority of the Irish people (cheers). It is a policy of everlasting strife proclaimed to the subjects of the Queen by a man who calls himself the Minister of an untied empire (cheers). Let me ask what is this Ulster that is invited to rebel against what is assumed to be in the future the will of the Queen, Lords, and Commons of the united Parliament. First of all, if you take all Ulster properly so called there is a Nationalist majority in Ulster (cheers). The majority of the Ulster representatives is on the Nationalist side, but the population that the Prime Minister desires to incite to insurrection is comprised in a small fraction of Ulster—the north-east corner of Ulster, containing no doubt a large population in the great city of Belfast. Lord Salisbury attacks the Catholics of the south. Has he