

A HISTORIC PRONOUNCEMENT

THE PRIME MINISTER ON HOME RULE

GREAT NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION IN DUBLIN

After the great and memorable reception of Thursday night, August 18, the protracted scene of wild enthusiasm, the blaze of illuminations in the July twilight, and the vast cheering crowd, the Premier had an opportunity on the following morning of looking around one of the prettiest portions of Dublin's environs—the grounds of the Chief Secretary's Lodge, with its commanding view over the magnificent expanse of the Phoenix Park. It was a beautiful morning, calculated to give the distinguished visitors a pleasant impression of the natural beauties surrounding the Capital, after their experience of the capacity of Dublin people to produce a vividly-picturesque demonstration in their streets.

At 6 o'clock streams of people were steadily setting towards the Theatre Royal, around which crowds were already collecting. Inside the vast building was elaborately decorated. When the doors were opened at a quarter to seven, the crowds poured into all parts of the building, and in less time than it takes to write the building was transformed from a vista of empty red-cushioned seats to a packed auditorium, with tier upon tier of faces rising from the floor to the ceiling.

Remarkable Scenes.

On the stroke of 8 the Premier, accompanied by Mrs. Asquith, who was carrying a huge bouquet, and followed by Mr. John Redmond, the Master of Elibank, Mr. Joseph Devlin, and Mr. John Dillon appeared on the platform. Instantly all members of the large audience rose to their feet, and a roar of cheering broke out, Mr. and Mrs. Asquith bowing occasionally.

MR. REDMOND OPENS THE MEETING.

At five minutes past eight o'clock Mr. John Redmond, M.P., came forward to open the proceedings, and received a most enthusiastic greeting. He said: We all of us, Irish men and women, are very proud of the extraordinary greeting given to the Prime Minister last night by the masses of the people of the metropolis of Ireland. That demonstration was a spontaneous outpouring of the gratitude of a whole people to a great man who had come to this country to champion a cause that is, to the mass of the Irish people, dearer than their lives. The dimensions, the good order, the absolute sobriety, and the whole-hearted enthusiasm of the enormous assemblage must have impressed—deeply impressed—our guest. For my part, I doubt if any Minister of the British Crown, at any time, or at any place in the Empire, ever received a more magnificent tribute of confidence and gratitude, and may I, without offence, be allowed to say that I doubt very much whether the Prime Minister will meet with the like until the inevitable day when in the near future he comes here in attendance on the Sovereign to assist in the ceremony of reopening the Parliament of a free and reconciled Ireland. Well, great as last night's demonstration was, this meeting in this building to-night is in some respects equally remarkable. Any one who is at all acquainted with the metropolis of Ireland recognises that there is here to-night assembled a gathering representative of all classes and all creeds, and all sections in the capital of Ireland. But I would like to say to Mr. Asquith that this meeting is not merely remarkable for that reason. We have here to-night the Lord Mayors and Mayors of every city and town in Ireland, with two exceptions. We have here the Chairmen of the County Councils of 28 out of the 32 counties of Ireland. While I esteem it a great honor to preside over such a gathering, my duty, as I have said, in that office is a very easy one. We desire—we all desire—to honor the Prime Minister by every means in our power. His visit is a guarantee—indeed, an unnecessary guarantee—to us that the Home Rule Bill which has been accepted by Ireland

in absolute good faith as a final settlement of the international quarrel between the two countries, will not merely pass through the House of Commons this session, but will pass into law in this Parliament. We believe that, great as are the attainments and achievements of Mr. Asquith in every walk of intellectual and political life, his name will finally go down to posterity chiefly immortalised by the fact that it has been reserved for him to bring to fruition the policy of Gladstone and of Parnell—by freeing Ireland and uniting the Empire. My Lords, ladies and gentlemen, I have now the honor to call upon the Prime Minister to address you.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S HISTORIC SPEECH.

Mr. Asquith then came forward, and once more the entire audience rose to its feet, and for many minutes there was another record scene of enthusiasm. When this had ceased, he said:—I cannot, as I said last night, express in language that could in any way represent my real and heartfelt feeling of gratitude awakened in me, first, by the magnificent—and I believe unparalleled—demonstration of popular enthusiasm yesterday; next, by the privilege which you have accorded me of addressing here to-night an assembly which may truly be regarded as representative of the best ideals and aspirations of the Irish people. I have come here, sir, to Dublin with a double purpose. In the first place, to assure the people of Ireland, though, as Mr. Redmond has been good enough to say, I do not think that any such assurance is necessary, of the resolute determination of the British Government, the British House of Commons, and the British people to bring your great cause to a speedy and a triumphant issue; and next, though not less important, I have come here, I believe I may say—for unless I honestly believed it in the position I hold, I should not be here—I have come here charged with a

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between Ireland and Great Britain. Ladies and gentlemen, the democracies of these two islands have been long and artificially separated. It was, in our opinion, mine certainly, and I believe yours, an unnatural separation—and not due to real or abiding antagonisms, whether material or moral. But our history in the past has exhibited a tragic series of misunderstandings and misadventures, and it will be foreign and injurious to my purpose to-night to attempt to forecast the precise appraisal of praise or blame which the verdict of history will ultimately award either to nations or to individuals. When one surveys the troublous and tangled annals of the past, there have been moments of missed or misused opportunities, where it seemed as though peace between the two countries might have been attained. One such was the Treaty of Limerick. Another was the birthday of Grattan's Parliament in 1782, the third was the too brief Viceroyalty of Lord Fitzwilliam in 1795; and once again when Mr. Gladstone espoused the cause of Home Rule. Each of these interludes in an otherwise almost unbroken history of misunderstanding and estrangement, brought about a momentary gleam of hope in what seemed to be the pitiless exigencies of a malignant horoscope. I have come here to tell you to-night with confidence that the clouds have rolled away, that in the House of Commons you have a majority of the elected representatives of the people of Great Britain, and that with unity, discipline, and patience the end is within sight. Be it remembered the House of Commons has, by a large and significant majority, passed the Second Reading, and after a protracted debate in Committee has assented to the vital clause of the Bill which my Government has introduced for the better Government of Ireland. I am not going to-night to enlarge in any detail upon the specific provisions of that measure, and I will tell you why. The opposition is purely destructive in its objects and anarchic and chaotic in its methods. They have voted, as my Parliamentary colleagues here know, with cynical disregard for their previous professions, and even for the elementary doctrines of their political creed. They have voted already in the course of our discussions in favor of political and privileged treatment for four selected counties in the province of Ulster; in favor of a single Chamber as against two