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A PROPHET.

The immortal Curran, addressing the Irish Commons in 1793 in favor of Catholic emancipation, employed words of prophetic import in reference to the political situation in Ireland at that time. "A disinherited people cannot long subsist. With infinite regret must any man look forward to the alienation of three millions of our people, and to a degree of subservience and corruption in a fourth. I am sorry to think that it is so very easy to conceive that in case of such an event the inevitable consequence would be an union with Great Britain. And if any one desires to know what that would be, I will tell him. It would be the emigration of every man of consequence from Ireland; it would be the participation of British taxes without British trade; it would be the extinction of the Irish name as a people. We should become a wretched colony, perhaps leased out to a company of Jews, as was formerly in contemplation, and governed by a few tax gatherers and excisemen, unless possibly you may add fifteen or twenty couples of Irish members, who may be found every session sleeping in their collars under the manager of the British minister." These prophetic words were in great part realized after the Union had been accomplished. These were emigration, taxation, corruption, impoverishment and political servitude. For many years after that event the Irish people took no interest in Parliamentary elections, and 100 nobles for years slept in their collars at Westminster under the manager of the British minister, voting freely for every measure binding their country, of which they were said to be representatives, in heavier chains. Curran's prophecy of utter and irrevocable ruin had long since been realized but for O'Connell, Butt and Parnell. Irish affairs have now reached an acute crisis. And though there is for the moment in power in Britain a ministry pledged to maintain the hateful, infamous and execrated Union of 1801, the time is, we believe, at hand when there will be once more a Parliament sitting in Ireland, to make laws for its good government. The British Parliament has long since shown its inability to deal with Ireland, and the British people have now realized the truth of the warnings and predictions of the Grattans, the Currans and the other eminent Irish statesmen of old—men more honestly devoted to connection with Britain than the servile place-hunters who sold Ireland and disgraced England. Mr. Gladstone lately alluded to the present grave condition of affairs in Parliament in these terms. Said he:

The crisis is a double one. There is a crisis in Ireland when, after sending here a large representation we trample under foot the whole wishes and convictions of the people as expressed by five-sixths of their members. The second crisis is the reduction of Parliament to paralysis and impotence. I predicted that unless the Irish question was settled Parliament would find the greatest difficulty in performing its duty toward England and Scotland. That prediction has been more than verified. We have reached such a point that not only does Ireland monopolize the time of Parliament, but Parliament is incapable of dealing with the whole Irish question. Home Rule is the first Irish controversy, but no one attempts to prosecute it within the House. We are forbidden to say a word on the most vital point in question, and are confined to the most miserable corner by the framing of a Coercion bill to put down the liberties of Ireland. This inability of Parliament to have Ireland's wishes and wants discussed in a practical manner constitutes a crisis which will prevent the country from going asleep on the subject. We propose under cover of Imperial supremacy to grant Ireland real, effective management of local and exclusively Irish affairs, with the same conviction with which we granted Home Rule to the Colonies. If Lord Hartington's Grand Committee is appointed and his proposals made, whether we consider them sufficient or not, they will be considered in a candid, friendly spirit, with a disposition to do justice to the people of both England and Ireland, and release Parliament and the country from the deplorable and disgraceful dilemma in which it has been placed.

Well, there is not a man in Ireland, save a few noisy Orangemen, who does not know that coercion must be a failure.

We cannot even for a moment conceive that there is a single member of the Salisbury Cabinet who believes it can be a success. We are sorry to think that the sole purpose of the measure is to drive the Irish into armed resistance in order to justify massacre and disfranchisement. Salisbury has given evidence of a brutal and sanguinary disposition. He has besides placed himself, so far as Ireland is concerned, altogether in the hands of the Orange garrison there—proof sufficient that he favors the extinguishment of Irish freedom in the blood of the Irish people. Recent events conclusively show that in such sentiments he is not sustained by the British masses. We believe that the British democracy will, under Mr. Gladstone's lead, soon release Parliament from its present "deplorable and disgraceful dilemma."

AN OLD ORY REVIVED.

The union of 1801 was, we all know, carried through the Irish Parliament, by means of the open purchase of members of Parliament and of Parliamentary constituencies. Not a dozen of the majority for the union in either House, voted from honest conviction. But for appearance sake, the government had to advance some plea of justification for the abominable measure. The Irish public were told that the union was necessary to the perpetration of British connection, the Irish Protestant was assured that it was essential to the maintenance of Protestant ascendancy forever, while to Catholic prelates it was whispered that they and their flocks would, under the union, soon obtain relief from their civil disabilities. Nothing, however, that ministers could say, or do, or promise, could popularize the odious measure. When at length it became law, no man could have pronounced himself against it without being set down as a rebel and a traitor. He was at once termed an enemy of the Crown and of British connection. Ireland was then crushed, helpless and bleeding from every pore. But she failed not to protest, even in the feeble tones at her command, against the iniquitous act which robbed her of her Parliament. The Protestant saw himself reduced to provincial insignificance—the Catholic saw the chains of his servitude drawn more closely about him than ever before. To the credit of the latter he is said, that he was willing to bear those chains still longer, if by his bearing of them could facilitate the restoration of Ireland's Parliamentary independence. Daniel O'Connell eloquently voiced Irish sentiment when in 1813—twelve years after the union was put in force, and sixteen before Catholic emancipation—he spoke in Dublin in fiery denunciation of the abolition of Ireland's legislative independence. "Your enemies," said the Liberator, "accuse me of a desire for the independence of Ireland. I admit the charge, and let them make the most of it. I have seen Ireland a kingdom. I reproach myself with having lived to behold her a province! Yes, I confess it, I will ever be candid upon the subject; I have an ulterior object—the repeal of the union and the restoration to old Ireland of her independence. I am told that it is indiscreet to avow this intention. It may be so, but in public affairs discretion may easily pass for dissimulation, and I will not be guilty of it. And if to repeal the union be the first service that can be rendered to Ireland, as it clearly is, I for one most readily and heartily offer to postpone our emancipation, in order to promote the cause of our country."

Mr. O'Connell on the same occasion also said: "Your enemies say, and let them say it, that I wish for a separation between England and Ireland. The charge is false; it is, to use a modern quotation, as 'false as hell.' And the man who originated, and those who seek to inculcate it, know it to be a falsehood. There lives not a man less desirous of a separation between the two countries—there lives not a man more deeply convinced that the connection between them upon the basis of one king and separate Parliaments would be of the utmost value to the peace and happiness of both countries, and to the liberties of the civilized world."

The very same cry, the very same accusation has been raised against Mr. Gladstone, but with, of course, much less success than against Mr. O'Connell. We find a singular and extraordinary similarity between Mr. Gladstone's recent utterances on the subject of Home Rule and the views of the Liberator just cited. The ex-Primer lately declared at Swansea:

land, as Scotland is united to England; not that they are dead to their own national interests and concerns, but that they desire to pursue them and promote them as members of a family—like and compacted Empire. And we have a state of things, gentlemen, in which if we do not lose our golden opportunity, those same ends will be gained. While Ireland, in consonance with her history and traditions, and I might say in consonance with those physical circumstances which have divided her from us by the Channel, and which greatly operate upon the mind and actions of men, while she desires the management of her own affairs, she is solidly disposed to union with you, to serve you, to contribute to your objects, to be one with you in everything that concerns the greatness of the Empire."

This noble declaration was made in presence of a gathering of Welshmen—to whom the grand old man had just previously said—speaking at the expression of every sentiment the genuine Celtic enthusiasm of that noble people: "I am not going to compare the history of the relations between England and Wales with the deplorable, disgraceful, shocking, and revolting history of the relations between England and Ireland; but the object of all I declare that I feel to be nearest my heart, being an Englishman by birth, having lived in England, having fought and labored for England with all my might, through a long life— anxious as I am to put an end to the sorrows of Ireland and to bring her people into a formal and regular state if possible, I am yet more anxious to live to see the day, if God should grant me the enormous favour, that the deepest stain that lies on the English character and reputation should be removed by the final work of doing justice to Ireland's grievances."

The enemies of Ireland may call Mr. Gladstone's followers separatists and disunionists. They are truly the real friends of the connection between both countries. They are the genuine advocates of a perpetuation of that connection—for justice, infamy and iniquity have no enduring power and the attempt to maintain the enormities of the Union of 1801 must, if persisted in, terminate in violence, disorder and disruption.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

To the believer in the sublime mystery of Redemption, the fact which we are called upon to contemplate on the feast of the Assumption, August 15th, wonderful as it is, and beyond the ordinary course of events, presents no real difficulty. The whole life of Christ on earth is a miracle of divine grace. It is a miracle that for four thousand years He was looked for by the people of God with anxious expectancy, and was foretold by the prophets, and that the principal events of His life were described by them with admirable minuteness of detail; so that by Jacob and Daniel, Malachi and Aggeus the very time of his earthly life was predicted with precision. By miracles his birth was made known to the shepherds feeding their flocks on the mountains of Judea, and to the wise men of the East, to whom was given the gift of understanding the lesson of the mysterious star which announced that God had become man, and that the life of the Messiah on earth had begun.

It is not necessary to enumerate the miracles which spread our Saviour's fame throughout Syria and even distant countries, culminating in His resurrection, that great miracle which forms the basis of Christian faith and hope. In the life of the Blessed Virgin, too, the special interposition of divine Providence is an ordinary occurrence. Her preservation from the stain of original sin from the first moment of her life is an article of faith, and it is implied in the first promise of Redeemer made to our first parents, after the fall, when Almighty God couples together the "woman," Mary, and "her seed," Christ, in the crushing of the serpent's head; in the perpetual enmity which exists between the woman and her seed on the one hand, and the serpent, the devil, on the other. It is further implied in the prophecy of Isaiah, who gives as a sign from God that a virgin shall conceive and bear a son whose name shall be called, Emmanuel, or God with us. The Hebrew article prefixed to the word virgin here signifies the eminence of virginity. It is implied in the address of the Angel Gabriel when the announcement is made to her of Christ's birth: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed are thou amongst women"—that is, by the Hebrew idiom, most blessed of all women. It is implied in her triumph over Satan related in Apoc. xii.

And a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and on her head a crown of 12 stars. . . and the dragon persecuted the woman who brought forth the man child. . . and the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman, water as it were a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the river. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was angry against the woman and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep

the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Her life was marked with many other wonders. The visit of the Archangel, sent by the adorable Trinity to honor her, the inspiration by the Holy Ghost, by which she uttered the sublime canticle of the Magnificat, in which she proclaims "He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is his name." (St. Luke, ii.) It is no great matter of surprise that her death also should be marked by proofs of the special favor in which she was held by Almighty God.

As even Christ died, it was not to be excepted that His mother should be exempt from this, the common lot of mankind. Hence the Blessed Virgin Mary died also. But Christ rose from the dead glorious and triumphant, and forty days afterwards, on Ascension day, He ascended into heaven. It was fitting to the reverence due to his mother, whom He so revered on earth, that on her death she should be taken also to heaven as well bodily as in her soul, to enjoy at once that blessedness which is not attained by mankind in general, and will not be until the day of general judgment.

It is not of faith that the Blessed Virgin was so assumed into heaven; nevertheless there is strong evidence that this is the case. It has been asserted by some opponents of this tradition that it was unknown in the 6th century. St. Gregory of Tours gives testimony that in his time it was received as a well-authenticated fact. The following is his account of it: "When the Blessed Mary had come near the end of her mortal career, all the Apostles assembled at her house from all parts of the world, and learning that she was to be taken away, watched with her. The Lord Jesus then, accompanied by His angels, appeared to them, and, taking his mother's soul, entrusted it to the Archangel Michael. The vision then disappeared. In the morning the apostles bore the virgin body on a bier and laid it in the tomb. They then remained near the monument awaiting a second appearance of our Lord. In fact, Jesus returned, and taking the sacred body of His Mother, bore it to paradise on a bright cloud, where, united with her glorious soul, she reigns in glory amidst the elect rejoicing for all eternity, in its splendors."

This history so minutely related is evidently not the mere invention of the illustrious Bishop of Tours, but the expression of the faith of the Church of France. This is the more evident, as the French liturgy of that same age contains an office of the Assumption of Mary, wherein the same facts are related, in almost the same words which are employed by St. Gregory.

The Mozarabic liturgy, used in Spain, also declares that Mary merited "to be borne to heaven in a manner not given to any other," because "Christ wished His mother to reign there." That the doctrine dates from a much earlier period even than this is evident from St. Cyril's life of Euthymius written about the year 420. Here it is stated that an ancient church is situated East of Jerusalem dedicated under the title of the Holy Assumption. St. Cyril was Bishop of Jerusalem. He, therefore, wrote with full knowledge of the facts, and it follows that the belief in the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was held in the East as well as the West. This Church is proved to have been built in the reign of Constantine the Great, at the beginning of the fourth century. Earlier still, St. Dionysius the Areopagite speaks of it in addressing Timothy, as of a fact well known and remembered by this holy Bishop. St. Dionysius was the cotemporary of our Saviour and of His Apostles, so that the history of the Assumption is thus traced to the Apostolic age. The feast of the Assumption was established in the West under the Pontificate of Pope Leo IV. in the first half of the 9th century, but in the East it was observed at a much earlier period. Andrew of Crete attests its observance in many churches in his time, the seventh century, and it was undoubtedly observed under the empire of Maurice in the sixth century.

The Church, as we remarked above, has not declared the Assumption to be of faith, but she has given sanction to the pious belief therein by authorizing the celebration of the feast throughout the world. In the office proper to the day these ejaculatory sentiments of praise occur: "Mary has been assumed into heaven; the angels rejoice and bless God with praise. The Virgin Mary hath been assumed to the heavenly mansion, where the King of kings sitteth on His throne studded with stars."

Also the words of St. John of Damascus are recited from his sermon on the "sleep (dormitio) of the Blessed Mary." "This day the sacred ark of the living God who conceived her Creator rests in the temple of her Lord, not built with hands. This day the immaculate Virgin, unassailed by earthly affections, but filled with thoughts of heaven, is placed in the heavenly dwelling places. How could death devour her who conceived the Son of God, who consecrated herself to God? How could hell receive her? How could corruption come upon that body in which life itself was borne? For her a way to heaven was prepared, straight, smooth and easy."

SIGNIFICANT FACTS.

There are some features of the struggle for Irish legislative independence which deserve to be at all times borne in mind, if we wish to appreciate the true strength of the demand for Home Rule. At the last general election (1886) there were 66 followers of Mr. Parnell elected in Ireland, without a contest. Three Irish Tories only enjoyed the privilege of a walk over. Of the 19 Home Rules subjected to a contest, Mr. Arthur O'Connor in East Donegal had a majority of 1,421, Mr. O'Doherty in North Donegal 3,349, and Mr. Kelly in the Southern division of the same noble county 3,506. In South Down Mr. McCartan's majority was 970, and in South Dublin, Sir Thomas Amonde's, 1,768. The Nationalists carried North Fermanagh by 266; South Fermanagh by 1,833; Lix, 8,122; Stephen's Green 2,448; Mid-Tyrone, 1,987; East Wicklow, 2,117; West Wicklow, 2,685. In North Monaghan Mr. Patrick O'Brien's majority was 1,471, and in the South St. Joseph N. McKenna's 3,706! In South Tyrone, the anti-Nationalist majority was only 99; in South Derry 138; and in North Tyrone 452. The chances of re-declaring these three constituencies at the next election are really excellent. In fact, were an appeal now made to the Irish people Mr. Parnell would undoubtedly triumphantly carry 88 or 90 seats. It is sometimes said that at the last election the constituencies were terrorized into returning Parnellite members, but this is not so. The fact is that in the 66 constituencies which returned Home Rulers without a contest there is but a handful of anti-Nationalists, insignificant as to numbers and influence. We have prepared a table showing the total vote cast at the election of 1885, when the "loyal minority" made a bitter fight against the National party:

Table with columns: Constituency, Nat., Anti Nat.

readiness for war. Well, Lord Randolph indulged in a comparison which must have been specially odious to his English hearers, some of whom, no doubt, believed that Britain either did, or could, or should, own the whole of the earth. He pointed out that the German empire has a population of 47,000,000, and spend £21,000,000 as ordinary expenditure on her army and navy; that the French republic has a population of 36,000,000, and expends £29,000,000 on the ordinary army and navy account; while, on the other hand, the United Kingdom has a population of 35,000,000, and her ordinary expenditure for army and navy amounts to £31,000,000; besides which India pays £20,000,000 for the Indian army, so that the British empire pays £17,000,000 for ordinary naval and military expenditure. Furthermore, Germany could within a month put into the field 1,500,000 men, without including her reserves. France could do equally as well. The German and French troops are all fully armed, provisioned and maintained; they have the very best artillery, rifles and weapons of every sort, with a perfect system of transport, and munitions of war that are simply overflowing. Thus in France and Germany the money for war purposes expended. What then, asks Lord Randolph, can Britain do for her £31,000,000? "Suppose we had to go to war or defend ourselves, we might, after a maddening delay and an incredible pouring out of money like water, possibly put in the field and maintain 150,000 men." This statement created a veritable sensation among the noble lord's hearers. But the sensation increased as he went on. He told them that they had a powerful fleet on paper—a fleet as powerful as France and Germany combined; but suppose, he added, England had to defend India from Russian, or Egypt from French attack, though there are many fortresses in the United Kingdom and throughout the British empire of strategic importance, there is not a single fortress properly armed and provisioned—while many places of strategic importance are wholly unarmed and unprovisioned. These, the noble lord confessed, were strong statements, but nothing he declared to what was to follow. What followed? Reader, give ear to the very words of one of Britain's greatest statesmen. He said:

"You have not one single heavy gun in reserve, you have no reserve whatever of heavy projectiles for those guns. Your horse artillery, of which the British nation is so proud, is armed with what Lord Walsley has called the 'worst gun in Europe; your field artillery is armed with the most inferior weapon; your infantry are armed with rifles which have been proved in action to be of the most defective and inferior description, and with bayonets which have been proved to be utterly unreliable. Your cavalry are armed with swords of equally bad manufacture; your sailors are armed with cutlasses of the same worthless description, and it is a fact that, though at any time you might be called upon to defend the empire, you have not got at home, in spite of your vast expenditure of thirty one millions, land transport for 20,000 men."

This being England's naval and military condition, Lord Randolph thought, if the most utter and glowing folly to talk about the ascendancy of England in the councils of Europe or for an English minister to dream of resisting the advance of Russia in south eastern Europe by military force. The blame for the state of things did not rest upon the English people or upon Parliament, but upon the system of naval and military expenditure and upon those responsible for that system. Year after year Parliament had cheerfully voted millions for the support of the army and navy; in fact, the House of Commons had never refused to vote the sums asked by the minister of the navy. "Under these circumstances," added Lord Randolph, "you will understand the sort of system of expenditure of public money against which I dashed myself, and with which I utterly refused to be connected either for a day or an hour, either as a Minister or as Chancellor of the Exchequer." The noble lord then proceeded to relate some anecdotes to illustrate the truth of his position as to England's defenceless condition.

"The morning before the bombardment of Alexandria the French fleet sailed away from the harbour and left the English fleet to do the work. After the bombardment the Sultan and Alexandria had not got on board ten rounds of heavy shell to fire from their guns. The Sultan and the Alexandria, two of your finest ships, would have been utterly at the mercy of the heavy artillery of the French ironclads, and what is worse, there was not at that time any reserve whatever of heavy shells in Malta. I will tell you another story still more startling. You remember the expedition to Kharطوم and the formation of the desert column which was to cut itself off at its base and plunge into the desert. The life of that column depended upon its being properly equipped; yet when that column started and was in action it was found that a great portion of the shells which had been sent out for its artillery were too large for the guns which accompanied the column, and another great portion of the shells had either not been filled or were so imperfectly filled that they would not explode."

The noble speaker amused his audience when in his own sententious way he added that he had not yet half done. He re-

called the critical condition of Europe last fall. Had England then been called to war there was not one single cartridge of ammunition in store for the machine guns. He had something else to tell his audience—something worse he thought than anything he had yet recited. He had no doubt that the Admiralty would contradict it, but that contradiction he declared worthless. He stated:

"The Monarch, one of our powerful ironclads, came into harbour, and required heavy guns for her turret. There were none to give her. They took two heavy guns from Spithead and Portsmouth and put them on board the Monarch, and they are only capable of firing seventy rounds. Now you understand what this system is against which I wish to bring if possible the pressure of the English people. Now I have a splendid story to tell you, a story which has just come out and which is very little known. A very important department of the War Office is the Ordnance Department, and they are under the impression that they are capable of designing heavy and powerful guns. In 1883 and 1884 they designed the gun called the 43 ton gun, and they called on the great firm of Messrs. Armstrong to construct fifteen of these guns. Messrs. Armstrong, who know a great deal more about gun construction than the Ordnance Committee, suggested that the gun was a bad design and would be a bad gun. The Ordnance Department told Messrs. Armstrong to mind their own business and make the guns. The guns were made and cost £200,000. - When they were sent to Woolwich they were to be put in ships of war and sent to sea. A Government official, Captain Noble, told the department, "Do not send these guns to sea. They are bad guns and cannot stand the charge which you will put into them." The Ordnance Department told Captain Noble to mind his own business. Away go the guns to sea—four on board the Collingwood. At the second round of firing, with only half the charge, one of those guns burst right away. The whole of the guns are recalled and condemned. The whole of the expenditure of £200,000 has been found to be worthless. Now, would you believe it? If you had to go to war tomorrow, four of those precious guns are being kept in reserve in order to be placed on board the Collingwood."

Lord Randolph then went on to charge that in 1883 the Admiralty had launched the Ajax and the Agamemnon costing £500,000. It was found that if they steamed more than eight miles an hour they did not steer, that they were really unmanageable and perfectly useless because they could be sent to the bottom by almost any adversary. He then alluded to the Imperieuse, a very powerful ship, armed in a peculiar way. When launched she was found to draw four feet more of water than they had supposed, all the armour she was intended to have above water was below water, leaving her wholly unprotected. This vessel had cost alone £500,000. Then the Admiralty went on to construct six large vessels of the Admiral class; one of these is the Collingwood, already mentioned. These, said Lord Randolph, are supposed to be protected vessels, able to engage the heavy artillery of land forts or hostile ironclads. But the fact is, that they are so defectively constructed and so poorly protected, that they are to all intents and purposes unprotected. They cost £4,500,000. On ships of the Admiral class it is that the British nation must depend to defend the coast. Had they to engage against the heavy artillery of land forts or ironclads, the sailors of the Collingwood, for instance, would know that they had a gun certain to burst, and a ship that could be perforated at a dozen points and sent to the bottom. But the Admiralty, pointed out the noble lord, was not yet done. They proceeded to construct two other vessels, the Victoria and Renown upon which it was proposed to expend £1,000,000, although a person high in the Admiralty considers them worse than ships of the Admiral class. Thus the enormous sum of £7,400,000 had been practically thrown away. The speaker then called attention to seven more ships, belted cruisers of the Australia class—intended to have 18 inches of armour above water line. It is now, however, discovered that when these ships have on board the full quantity of coal required to keep them at sea, they will, instead of being eighteen inches above the water line, be six inches below. The total cost of these vessels, as stated in Parliament by the first Lord of the Admiralty, will be £2,000,000. "You can now," indignantly exclaimed Lord Randolph, "You can now understand why it is that the army and navy estimates increase, and what is the sort of system which is supposed to defend the interests of the British empire. You can imagine how strongly I feel on this point, and I want to make you as angry and furious as I am myself, and to bring down upon those responsible for the state of things the anger and even vengeance of the people. The utterly rotten and monstrous system responsible for this desperate state of things has actually had the audacity to increase its own direct cost to the taxpayer by a sum of nearly a million a year since 1855." The noble lord had no hesitation in declaring before the English public that the Admiralty officials appeared to be perfectly reckless—in fact, to have gone entirely mad. He distinctly informed his audience