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TORONTO

A Despotic Government

Mon. Edward Blake says Ireland is ruled on the intolerable principle of Protestant Ascendancy.

In the debate on Irish jury packing, in the House of Commons, on May 8, Hon. Edward Blake made the following speech:—

I have no intention of keeping the attention of the Committee on the particular case upon which the Attorney-General and the Government would desire that this debate should turn (cheers). This concerns itself with the deeper question—it is with the general question of the administration of justice in Ireland in this department, and the selection and framing of juries for the trial of criminal cases. That is the real question. It is not a new question; but it is a question, the age of which renders it the more intolerable (cheers). It is a question which demands the attention of a people who call themselves free in this land, who believe they are giving the same freedom to Ireland that they claim for themselves, which demands more and more in this heyday of freedom in this land the attention of those who are treating the sister island in such a different fashion. Now the Attorney-General of England says that no man is made to stand aside because of his religion, and except for the purpose of securing an impartial jury, but when, in the case which we have before us to-day, and in cases which we hear of from day to day, and in the cases which we have heard of for 150 years in history—when in all these cases the practical general results have been that the Crown has used its power to stand by in respect of a people composed in a large majority of Roman Catholics all the Roman Catholics, until twelve Protestants have been found (cheers). That is the general rule—when that is found to be the case we may see how the matter stands. I say that is the general rule. In Cork the other day there were 12 Catholics made to stand by in the Sigo case there were 23 Roman Catholics made to stand by until the same result was obtained. Now it is said that this means obtaining an impartial jury. Yes, impartial just according to the view of those who insist upon maintaining the old principle of Protestant ascendancy (cheers). Chatham has said that the essence of the constitution in this country was that it secured the 12 men in this box, but what kind of men? Not 12 men selected by the Crown in an issue between the Crown and the subject, but 12 men who would do justice between the Crown and the subject (Irish cheers). The Attorney-General asked us to believe—whose servants time after time produce the result that from a panel in which a large majority is Roman Catholic, yet every Roman Catholic is eliminated by the action of the Crown, and the Protestants chosen—that that is a matter with which faith and religion have nothing to do (Irish cheers). Why could such things as this not occur in England? Because in this country you have the reality of free government by the people, because they are governed by the laws which they know they have made and amend (Irish cheers). It is because the law which they have made and can by constitutional means amend—that these laws have on the whole their sympathy and support, that the twelve men in the box are the guardians of the law (cheers). The condition of things in the sister island is that the people do not make the law which they are called upon to obey (Irish cheers). The laws are made by the British majority in spite of the wishes of the people. It is because defects in the law are not to be amended by the constitutional process of their laws—that they are wrong in their opinion (Irish cheers). The basis on which the foundation of the system and the utility of the 12 men in the box rests does not prevail (cheers). I can, therefore, understand the real justification for the gentlemen's action, which is, that in the case of the administration of justice, the root of the evil is that in the legislative control of the people by that which their Parliament you have the essentials of justice (Irish cheers), as you cannot carry out the substance—your laws according to your forms of justice—so this power, this weapon, as it is true, in the armory of British law, but which is never used and which, if it were called upon, would be turned against the people (Irish cheers). You are this Parliament to rule Ireland, the wishes of 12 people, which you would not for the sake of the people in this country to be the rule, so that you are to rule Ireland despotically according to the forms of justice, and that you showed kindness that you were ruling according to a despo-

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tic system (Irish cheers) I do not believe in the early days the people of this country would have been so indifferent as they are to-day. You live now in the heyday of freedom, and don't feel those anxieties for the liberty of the subject which you felt in former times when the power of the Crown was greater, and when the jury box was the refuge of the people. We all know of cases of jurors who violated their oaths, and of whom no man thinks worse to-day (hear, hear). There were times when in great trials for seditious libel, and in spite of the threats of the highest authorities of the law, jurymen insisted on delivering a general verdict of not guilty (hear, hear). There was also a time when it was found impossible to humanise the law in this country, and when jurymen refused to convict in cases where a verdict of guilty or a charge of stealing an article worth 40s. would have meant the death penalty. The twelve men in the box changed the law by rendering such sentences impossible of execution, and this in spite of the tearful protests of the city magnates that they could get no verdicts (hear, hear). In this heyday of liberty, when you are so fortunately circumstanced here that we are very much giving up juries in this country, and trusting more to judge, even here it is possible that a day may come when the twelve men in the box may be required in this island (Irish cheers). But what is the case in Ireland? You have under your system a condition of things in which there is a deep and bitter division of opinion and sentiment upon things political and religious, and particularly on things which concern the land. God knows that for the existence of that state of things the mass of the Irish population is not responsible (Irish cheers). The minority in Ireland whom you put there, kept there, created there, and by whose views and opinions you have largely acted, are mainly responsible (Irish cheers). But that state of things we all deplore, and we all desire to see diminishing. Did you suppose it possible that such a result can be achieved so long as those general facts can be stated with reference to the administration of justice in Ireland upon which this debate has turned? The ruling power says, not in words, but in deeds, which speak more plainly than words, that the only way we can get our laws obeyed is by keeping those who are Catholics out of the jury box until we get twelve Protestants in the jury box (loud Irish cheers). It was not said, of course, in all cases. If it were it would become intolerable and unnecessary, but in the great number of cases in which there was a great division of opinion, there is, as far as I can see, no text except the test of the religious faith, and I say that is an intolerable condition of things (Irish cheers) those who tell us that that condition is necessary to carry on Government in Ireland tell us that Government in Ireland stands condemned (Irish cheers). They tell us that a condition of things exists which would be intolerable here, and ought to be felt by the people of this island intolerable for it also, and which demands a change which will bring the laws into harmony with the people and enable real and substantial liberty to be enjoyed by those who inhabit the land (Irish cheers). Can you see the effect of this state of things upon the masses of the population? What are the majority to feel when a time after time in this class of cases, which must evoke their feelings and create the greatest excitement amongst them, when they see that three-fourths of the population which is of the faith to which I myself do not belong, the Roman Catholic faith, is excluded from the jury box as incapable of giving a just verdict (Irish cheers). Is the bitterness of feeling in Ireland mainly on the part of the majority? Is it not just as much on the part of the minority? Are not the minority those who as long as they could rode roughshod over the majority and who held on as long as they could to place and power and every bit of vantage ground? Are they not those who have been forced from these places, and who in many cases had to choose between civil war and legislation; and then chose the latter? I am not surprised at the court's hon. gentlemen

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adopt. It is of a piece with that rendered necessary by their determination to rule, not by methods which Englishmen would tolerate for an instant as applied to themselves, but by despotic and unconstitutional methods the country that they misgovern (loud and continued Irish cheers).

THE ASCENSION

Thursday, May 16.

This day the Church celebrates the Feast of the Ascension of Our Blessed Lord. Jesus was not taken up as was the Blessed Virgin. He ascended by His own power, because He is God. On that day He opened heaven for us, which was closed on account of the sin of our first parents. On that day also the souls of the just who died before Christ entered into heaven with Him.

The Mount of Olives is situated east of Jerusalem, about 2,400 feet above the level of the sea. It was on this Mount of Olives that during the Messianic dispensation Israel burnt before Easter a red cow, the ashes of which served to prepare water (lustral water), which they used for their purification. Whosoever had touched a dead body was obliged to purify himself with this water under pain of death.

Our Saviour passed a night on the Mount of Olives. Titus, during the siege of Jerusalem, encamped there his ten legions. Tancred, on arriving at Jerusalem, went alone to the Mount of Olives to contemplate the Holy City. While there five Mussulmans attacked him. He killed three and the others took to flight.

The Crusaders, before attacking Jerusalem, went to Mount Olivet, singing the Litanies, and Peter the Hermit preached to them there. In 1152 the King of Jerusalem, with his principal warriors, went to Naplouse, at the same time the Mussulmans tried an attack, placing the main body on the Mount of Olives. The inhabitants of Jerusalem sallied forth, killing a great number of their enemies and dispersing the others, who fled toward the Jordan, falling into the hands of the Crusaders returning from Naplouse.

Three roads led to this celebrated mountain, so often mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments. The first commences at the gate of the Garden of Gethsemane and passes around what is called the Tomb of the Prophets. Some twenty yards in the road, when on the side to the right hand, we see a white rock, about twenty yards east of the northeast angle of the Garden of Gethsemane, where, according to an ancient tradition, St. Thomas, being on his way to visit the Blessed Virgin in her grave, saw her ascending up to heaven, she letting fall to him on this same rock her girdle. The Greeks have a great

eneration for this rock. The girle is venerated at Prato, in Tuscany.

According to tradition, the Galileans had here a kind of national inn, where they dwelt during the celebration of their feasts at Jerusalem, and that there took place what we learn in the Acts of the Apostles.


"And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold, two men stood by them in white garments. Who also said: 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem, from the mount that is called Olivet, which is nigh Jerusalem, within a Sabbath days journey."

The mausoleum of Zeistum is built near the gate of a courtyard, in the centre of which is a small edifice, enclosing the place where our Lord ascended to heaven. In 120 persons, including His Holy Mother and His Apostles, on this holy place a church which was called the Basilica of Ascension, and which was visited by St. Paula. The army of Chosroes destroyed it in 616. It was rebuilt by Modestus, Bishop of Jerusalem, and visited by Arculphe some years later, he has left us a description in which he says it was round and open above.

St. Willebrord visited it in the eighth century, and says that the lustre suspended over the venerable footprints was protected by a cage covered with glass to guard against winds and rain.

In the year of the eighth century we find a convent of the Benedictines established on Mount Olivet by Charlemagne (this foundation was very probably destroyed by Hakeem and rebuilt by the Crusaders, who established a three canons of St. Augustine. After the expulsion of the Crusaders the church was again destroyed, though we still see the foundation of the pillars in the court above mentioned. In 1211 Willebrord d'Oldenburg found this holy site enclosed by a small edifice, which he said was built by a Mussulman, probably the same as we see there now, it is octagonal, having from six to seven metres in diameter. Formerly it was open, but for a long time it was covered in so as to serve for a mosque. Nobody should feel surprised at a Mussulman's decorating with a monument the site of the ascension as they do not believe that Jesus Christ was crucified. According to their Koran, Jesus was a prophet, and very powerful, that he gave to Judas his own form in punishment for his treason, and so he (Judas) was crucified by the Jews, who thought it was Jesus. As to the ascension, the Turks believe it was firmly as we do. In this mosque we see a part of the rock bearing the impression of the left foot of our Saviour, framed in by four pieces of marble, which rise up some centimetres, so forming a sort of enclosure, something less than a metre

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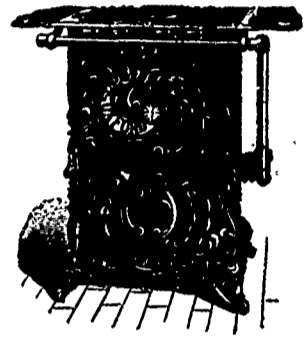
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