

THE TRUE UNIONISM.

Speech of Hon. Edward Blake, M.P.

From the Daily Argus, May 9.

One of the most remarkable Liberal gatherings which have taken place in Birmingham for a considerable time past assembled in the Town Hall last night, mainly with the view of hearing speeches by the Hon. Edward Blake, M.P., and Sir Walter Foster, M.P. Mr. Blake's colonial eminence, and the full realization of the high anticipations formed of him when he joined the Nationalist ranks at the last general election caused the gathering to be especially interesting, and despite the somewhat high temperature which prevailed for meetings of this character, the hall was crowded by an assemblage the leading characteristic of which was its extraordinary and strongly expressed enthusiasm. As prominent members of the Liberal party in the city came into the hall and were recognized they were greeted with rounds of applause, while the entry of the chairman, Alderman Wm. Cook, J.P., with Mr. Blake and other speakers, was the signal for a prolonged and stirring welcome.

The Chairman was particularly happy with one of his earliest observations, viz., that the Home Rule cause was not even yet quite dead, the satire upon a well-remembered assertion of

A PROMINENT BIRMINGHAM POLITICIAN being at once recognized by a round of applause and triumphant laughter. After touching upon the ethics of the case for Home Rule, Mr. Cook proceeded to refer to the recent lamentable outbreak of religious mob persecution in Belfast, which he directly attributed to the recent inflammatory speeches of Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, and—as the speaker continued with significant emphasis—other coercionist leaders. Each name evoked groans of reprobation, and the unspecified addendum to the list was instantly followed by cries of "Chamberlain" and hisses and groans. Coming to the Home Rule Bill now before Parliament Mr. Cook went on to assert that the position which that great measure had gained upon the second reading was such that no Government could now ever refuse to give a less measure of justice to Ireland than that which Mr. Gladstone now proposed, a statement which was very appreciatively received. Passing to the chief speaker of the evening, the Chairman referred to the great gain Mr. Blake had proved to Parliamentary debates in this country, and eulogized the patriotism which had led that gentleman to end his brilliant career in Canada in order to give his services to his country.

At this stage the Chairman read the following telegram from Sir Walter Foster at the House of Commons. "Carried the Eight Hours Bill." A roar of applause greeted the announcement, and at the call of an enthusiast at the back of the hall, rounds of cheers were given for "Good old John Burns." Sir Walter Foster had stayed to give his vote, but added to his message that he hoped to reach Birmingham in time to be present at the meeting.

Councillor Bishop moved the first resolution—one of support to Mr. Gladstone, and felicitation of his great success in Parliament with

THE HOME RULE BILL

in the face of persistent obstruction. Councillor Stevens seconded the resolution, and in touching upon Mr. Chamberlain's financial attack upon the Bill, observed that he thought they might well leave Mr. Chamberlain to his financial schoolmaster upon this matter, a roar of laughter and applause greeting this sally. Mr. Stevens, as a member of the audience observed, "scored one" when he said that there was never a greater sin against morality and right than the

action of educated and influential people in inciting ignorant men to violence and lawlessness in Belfast, and the burst of approving cheers which followed was so prolonged that it was some minutes before he could be heard again.

Mr. Blake's rising to support the resolution evoked a perfect hurricane of cheering, renewed in succeeding bursts for several minutes. Mr. Blake began quietly by referring to the honour he felt it to be addressing such an audience in this great city, with such past political traditions as had Birmingham. ("And will have again" was instantly retorted from the body of the hall, amid an approving shout.) The speaker then referred with gratitude to what Birmingham had done on behalf of Ireland years ago, when his country had but few friends on this side of the Irish Channel. He could understand the tardiness of some to be educated up to a right appreciation of this question, but he utterly failed to understand the position of those who, having received the light upon this question when the rest of the kingdom was so largely in darkness, had gone back when the full sunlight of it was illuminating the country at large. (Hear, hear.) Proceeding to deal with the

FLAGRANTLY OBSTRUCTIVE TACTICS

of the Opposition in the House of Commons, Mr. Blake expressed confidence that the people of this country would resent the fact that such tactics were solely responsible for the failure to pass more than a fraction of the useful programme of legislation which the people had endorsed. The measure designed to reform Parliamentary procedure he placed first in importance after the Home Rule Bill, and next to that the Bill for registration reform and the extension of the franchise. (Loud cheers.) Dealing with other matters contained in the Government programme, Mr. Blake came to the Welsh Suspensory Bill, which he described as a measure of Home Rule for Wales. The same Home Rule spirit breathed through other measures of the Government programme, "Take the Local Veto Bill—(here a burst of applause, with a slight discordant note, interrupted the speaker)—this was a measure of some difficulty. For his own part, he was of opinion that it would be highly important, in the interests of temperance, if provisions were made not only for prohibiting but for restricting the number of public-houses. (Loud applause.) Whatever the difficulties surrounding the measure, its home rule characteristics were unmistakable. It provided means for people in specified districts, having feelings and opinions upon this question, giving expression to those feelings. (Cheers.) In the Miners' Eight Hours Bill again, which had just triumphantly passed its second reading—(cheers)—there was another instance of this home rule policy. Taking into consideration the eminently liberal programme of the Government, and the position which they took with regard to that programme, he wanted to know how any member of the Opposition

COULD HAVE THE IMPUDENCE

to describe himself as Liberal Unionist. The emphasis which the speaker gave to the word Liberal drove home the point with a force that evoked a prolonged round of applause. He now came to the Home Rule Bill itself. All the prognostications of evil to the Government from the introduction of this Bill which their political opponents had so freely made had been falsified, for the Government were now stronger than ever, and completely and solidly united upon this the main issue. (Loud cheers.) The speaker then proceeded to deal, with searching and telling power, with the attitude of Birmingham in the past upon the Irish question, showing how, years ago, the electors of this city had given

unmistakable evidence of recognition of the necessity for the concession of local self-government to Ireland. This had been the spirit of this city up to 1886. Then the Secessionists took certain objections to the Home Rule Bill which was introduced. The present Bill has been moulded to meet their views, and their present attitude towards it, notwithstanding, was something which it was difficult to satisfactorily explain. (Hear, hear.) Leaving more questions of detail to be dealt with in committee, as he was happy to think they would be, he was glad to say that its main principles were not disunion and separation. (Hear, hear.) "I am," said Mr. Blake, "a Home Ruler, and because I am a Home Ruler

I AM A UNIONIST."

Great cheering followed this happily-expressed declaration of faith, which the speaker further enforced, by asserting that the only true, lasting and satisfactory measure of Home Rule to Ireland was to be obtained under the Union, and the only true union with this country possible for Ireland was to be obtained by Home Rule—a really moral and combining union by a free bargain and contract between the two people; not a measure of fraud and force such as the Act of Union was. (Great cheers.) The Bill recognised the inalienable supremacy of Parliament, and the Irish people were willing and desirous that the clauses upholding it should be made effective. (Renewed cheers.) They had accepted—nay, proposed—restrictions designed to calm the fears of some who hesitated to support the Bill. As to the cry about the danger involved to the rights of the minority, they had accepted every possible safeguard for those rights, if the Nationalists were so base as to seek to violate them. Personally, he was absolutely sure that, without these restrictions, the minority would be perfectly safe from oppression when Home Rule became an established fact, but for all that he was one of those who had most strongly advocated the insertion of these restrictions into the Bill, because he considered that they recognized fundamental principles of

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,

which he hoped the English people would some day apply to themselves. A great shout of approval greeted the expression of this enlightened hope. Mr. Blake went on to show by statistics as to the religion of incumbents of public offices in the districts of Ireland where Home Rule had its strongest following, the utter groundlessness of the fears which were urged by their opponents as to religious persecution of the minority, for offices were held by the Protestants quite beyond the proportion of the inhabitants who were of their faith. (Loud cheers.) Adverting to Mr. Chamberlain's recent statement that the passing of the Bill would entail a tax upon the British taxpayers of two millions a year, Mr. Blake completely exploded the fallacy by showing what was the present revenue drawn for Imperial purposes from Ireland, and he pointed out that the allegation simply amounted to this—that because it was not proposed to double the present contribution from Ireland, this country would lose two millions a year. (Loud cheers.) Such a statement was not worth a moment's thought. But it was not upon a miserable higgling bargain of finances that this great question would be settled. Let them gain for themselves a truly United Kingdom, and internal and external strength which belonged to a real union. Take away the sham union which had for so many years disgraced this country, and restore its efficiency to the Imperial Parliament, which had been paralysed by the Irish controversy for so long a time. If they could do all this and yet be as well off pecuniarily as they were now,

was it not a great bargain for them to make?

Great enthusiasm was again evoked by Mr. Blake's peroration. At the close of the speech the resolution was put and carried almost unanimously.

During the last portion of Mr. Blake's speech Sir Walter Foster entered the hall, and was at once greeted with a furor of cheering.

Councillor Osler, in a brief but most telling speech, proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Blake, the chairman, and the other speakers.

Sir Walter Foster was again warmly received on rising to second the motion. At the outset he referred with triumph to the splendid majority of 78 by which the Government had just carried the second reading of the Miners' Eight Hours Bill. The Home Rule question had now entered upon a new phase since the British Parliament had affirmed the principle by an entirely united and solid vote of the Liberal party. Obstructed and impeded though the passage of the Bill might be, it must pass through the House of Commons; and, confident in their strength, and in their final victory, they looked forward with confidence to its reception in the House of Lords. There the Bill might be rejected once, but their Lordships would think a long time before they rejected it a second time. (Great cheering.) Whatever was done with this great measure the Liberal Party were resolved to carry as much as was possible of the abundant programme which they had put forward at the last election before they again appealed to the country. (Cheers.) Sir Walter Foster, after eulogising Alderman Cook's services to the Liberal Party in Birmingham, expressed the hope that that gentleman would continue to lead the party until it once more occupied the proud position which it formerly held. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Blake and the chairman briefly acknowledged the unanimous passing of the resolution.

The Confessional.

Why does the world hate the confessional? I will tell you in a word. Because the men of the world are afraid of laying their hearts open. They know that there are black spots; that there are dark stains, deep wounds, old scars, open sores, and they hide them in darkness. The innocent have no fear, for their hearts are unspotted, and though conscious of many faults and many weaknesses they are free from the stains and wounds of an evil life. They are not afraid; to them confession is easy. But those who are conscious that they are carrying within them a secret which the world does not know, of which their neighbors are not aware, which the nearest to them does not suspect, which they would rather die than reveal—according to the shrinking of the flesh and blood, forgetting all the while that God knows everything—they fear and hate the thought of confession. This is the true reason why the world rails against confession; this is the reason why every revolution that breaks out at once burns the confessional. It dare not come near the confessional. When it sees a confessional, it sees a forerunning witness of the great white throne and of the day of judgment, and to get rid of this intolerable reality the anti-Christian revolution tears it out of the church and burns it in the street.—Cardinal Manning.

Poor Blood.

Persons, sick and convalescent whose blood grows poor and thin who have a distaste for food, whose members grow cold and inactive, whose sleep is agitated and uneasy, work whose flesh is wasting away, should use who have no energy and disinclination to Almoxia Wine, recommended by all the principal physicians. Gianelli & Co., 16 King street west, Toronto, sole agents for Canada. Sold by all druggists.