

not mean to say that the conduct of the Irish people—a large portion of it—under these circumstances was justifiable. Far from it. I do not mean to say that it might not have been necessary sometimes to pass these Acts.

TRUE FRIENDS OF IRELAND

have, from time to time, concurred in their passage, but I do mean to say that the condition of things lasting for eighty years, with such a record on its brighter side of remedial legislation and such a record on its darker side of coercive legislation, is a record that proves that the experiment of Local Government for Ireland by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, has been a disastrous failure. Besides legislative coercion, there were other methods of coercion employed. There is an army under the guise of a constabulary, of 12,000 or 13,000 of, I suppose, the best troops in the world, the Irish Constabulary, and we have had from time to time large portions of the military forces of the Empire quartered in England. From time to time not less than 50,000 men—I believe to-day not less than 50,000 men of the British army are stationed in Ireland to keep the people down, and large detachments of the British fleet frequent Irish harbors for the same purpose. Whether right or wrong in this controversy it cannot be contended that the Government of Ireland for eighty years has been a Government by constitutional means, but it must be admitted that it is a Government by force. That is in large result of the whole business. Now it is acknowledged—as the hon. member for Victoria has said—freely and frankly acknowledged—that Ireland was being misgoverned all these years. What a humiliating condition is that which the

MOTHER OF PARLIAMENTS,

the mother of constitutional freedom throughout the world, occupies on this question. Which of us did not feel with a pang of humiliation the keen shaft of the satirist, who forged, so to speak, the letter from the Sultan of Turkey, not long since calling, in response to some calls that had been made by England on him to remedy some grievances of his subjects, on the British Government to remedy the condition of the Irish people. Who did not feel that such a letter might have been fairly written, that such a complaint might have been fairly made, and that the argument sometimes urged in this House of *the quoque* might have been fairly used. Of these resolutions it is needless to speak. No doubt Ireland is largely in a state of anarchy, ruled as far as the Kingdom is concerned, mainly by force, mainly by, so far as a large portion of the people is concerned, an organization without and beyond the control of the law, but I contend that it is the delays which have taken place in their passage and the circumstances under which these measures of pressing justice

and importance have been at length granted, which are responsible for the distressed condition of that country. There were, for these delays, two reasons: Reformers, and I do not use the word in a party sense, or as defining wholesale the Reform party of England, as compared with the Conservative party, though I might so use it—but still there have been

HONORABLE EXCEPTIONS

in the Conservative party—Reformers, in the larger sense of the term, have from time to time pressed upon the public and upon Parliament, long before these reforms were granted, their justice and necessity; but the great body of public opinion was unquestionably hostile to Ireland. By a Parliament of the United Kingdom, in which the opinion of the majority must rule—it was impossible, under the constitutional system, that that justice or expediency, to which the majority were not alive, could be pushed forward. I believe that long ago many of these measures would have been carried by far-sighted statesmen, but that they felt it was impossible to carry them, but that they were, as Mr. Gladstone has put it, beyond the realm of practical politics, because the aristocratic, the large land holding interest, the Conservative interest, and many other interests were entirely too strong to enable the relatively small band of advanced Reformers to carry them at all. In a word the public opinion of the United Kingdom did not recognize the importance of it, and was not sufficiently advanced to discharge the duties of efficiently managing Irish affairs. The second difficulty was the want of time. Parliament was over-weighted with its concerns, it had to deal with

LARGE IMPERIAL CONCERNS,

it had to deal with local concerns which were supposed to be more pressing, and it was unequal to its task. We know that for a great many years Parliament has been unequal to its task in that regard. We know that measures have been brought in by strong Governments session after session and having been just crushed out by the pressure of other affairs, have not been reached. It takes years as a rule before that which is deemed sufficiently ripe for legislation to be actually brought into Parliament by a Government on its responsibility, can reach that stage of discussion, unless there be some extraordinary reason of urgency such as lately attended the discussion of the Irish question. It has so happened that men have been too apt to say with reference to the large questions to which I have referred, and which have been settled: "Oh, that question is not yet within the range of practical politics," just as Mr. Gladstone said on the Irish question in 1865, and so they say of these questions until gunpowder, murder, assassination, explosions, a condition of chronic disaffection breaking out in some particular manner, brings them to the

conclusion for in the range to be dealt Parliament long ago to would be deal so late as to ment being better feeling countries, and the conclusion who entertain who entertain and of sham do what he forward this there yet be the statesman Mr. Gladstone the General time:

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