

John Dillon and John Bright

STUDIES IN IRISH HISTORY.

BY JOHN HUNTER MCCARTHY, M.P.

From United Ireland.

The General Election of 1865 was in its results one of the most remarkable that have occurred during the whole of the Victoria epoch. It marked the passing away of an old order and the beginning of a new. Not long before it took place Mr. Gladstone had made himself conspicuous as the sympathizer with, and supporter of, advanced Radical ideas. The politician, who had been looked upon in his youth as the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories, had passed from Conservatism, through Conservative Liberalism, into pure and undiluted Liberalism. He was, even in those days, regarded as a Radical. Mr. Gladstone's process of conversion showed that the tide of liberalization was running high; the result of the General Election proved it still more conclusively. Mr. Disraeli, with the keen political insight which at once perceives the chief historical characteristic of any great event, declared in a speech, shortly after the General Election, that the new Parliament had very greatly increased the power, and the following of Mr. Bright. This was, indeed, the most conspicuous result of the election. Mr. Bright was at that time regarded as the champion of advanced thought, as the hero and the herald of Radical principles and Radical reforms. His position in the new Parliament was very strong. He had taken from his side, shortly before the new Parliament came into existence, his friend and companion, Richard Cobden; but death had also, almost immediately after the birth of the new Parliament, taken away Lord Palmerston, who was the most serious barrier to the progress of the new ideas of which Mr. Bright was regarded as the apostle. Men of rare gifts and rare genius came with that election for the first time into Parliamentary life, and rallied underneath Mr. Bright's banner. Most conspicuous among English members was John Stuart Mill, who had been successfully induced to come from his philosophic retirement in pleasant Avignon, and to dedicate for a season his fine intellect to the active service of the Radical party. Most conspicuous among Irish members was John Dillon.

John Dillon entered Parliament in 1865, as he had entered upon revolution in 1848, from a strong conviction of the duty he owed to his country. He had not been anxious for revolution in the Young Ireland days; he had opposed the premature explosion of insurrection as long as he could; and when he saw that a rising was inevitable, he threw in his lot with it as a comrade, as if he had approved of it from the beginning, and shared heroically the consequences of a catastrophe which he had striven to avert. After the rising failed, he succeeded in making his escape, and he lived for many years in exile in the United States. In later years a general amnesty allowed him to return to his own country. It was urged upon him that he could be of service to his country by entering Parliament, and he accepted the duty. Like many other Irishmen at that time, John Dillon was a great admirer and implicit believer in John Bright. John Dillon might very well believe that the Irish people and the representatives of the Irish people had a friend in Mr. John Bright. Mr. John Dillon was always a student of the political history of his time, and the utterances of Mr. John Bright might well have convinced a man of a more sceptical nature than Mr. John Dillon ever was, that Mr. Bright was a sustained and devoted friend to Ireland. There is no more instructive study for the Irish Nationalist of to-day than those volumes of Mr. Bright's collected speeches, which contain his utterances delivered on Irish questions. They deserve to be read and re-read far oftener than they are. They have been called attention to from time to time by Irish politicians myself, and more than twenty years ago, at a period of acute political crisis, ventured to make public extracts from them which had a curious bearing upon Mr. Bright's conduct towards the Land League and its supporters. But it will not be out of place here, after some of the very recent utterances of Mr. Bright at the dinner to Lord Spencer, and afterwards in the House of Commons, to look over some of these Irish speeches of his, and see what it was that made Mr. John Dillon regard him with such admiration. In the year 1845, in a speech on the Mayoath grant question, Mr. Bright, who had then only been a short time in the House, raised his voice against the wrong of Ireland. "I assure the Protestant Church of Ireland is at the root of the evils of that country. The Irish Catholics would thank you infinitely more if you were to wipe out that foul blot than they would even if Parliament were to establish the Roman Catholic Church alongside of it. They have had everything Protestant—a Protestant clique that has been dominant in the country; a Protestant Vicar to distribute places and emoluments among that Protestant clique; Protestant judges who have polluted the seats of justice; Protestant magistrates, before whom the Catholic peasant could not hope for justice. They have not only Protestants, but exterminating landlords, and more than that a Protestant soldiery, who at the beck and command of a Protestant priest, have butchered and killed a Catholic peasant even in the presence of his widowed mother. All these things are notorious; I merely state them. I do not bring the proof of them; they are patent to all the world, and that man must have been inobservant indeed who is not perfectly convinced of their truth." Two years later, in 1847, Mr. Bright, in speaking on the Coercion Bill, for which he felt himself compelled to vote, but, although not without making a strong protest against the system of governing Ireland, addressed some reproaches to the Irish representatives in the House of Commons for their inaction. "I am sure that 105, or even 90 English members sitting in a Parliament in Dublin, and believing their country had suffered from the effects of bad legislation, would by their knowledge of the case, their business habits, activity, union and perseverance, have shown a powerful front, and by uniting together, and working manfully in favor of any proposition they might think necessary to remedy the evils of which they complained, they would have forced it on the House. But the Irish members have not done this. So far, then, they are and have been as much to blame as any other member of this House for the absence of good government in Ireland. It is interesting to what may be called Mr. Bright's youth, with speeches made nearly forty years later, when the party whose presence he had so wished for, that party of united Irish members, showing a powerful front, united together, and working manfully in favor of any proposition they might think necessary to remedy the evils of which they complained, made their appearance in the English House of Commons, the reception they got from Mr.

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MADRID, Sept. 8.—At a meeting of the council yesterday King Alfonso declared he had confidence in the present ministry. He said he was convinced Emperor William would meet him half way in an honorable compromise.

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LONDON, Sept. 8.—According to trustworthy intelligence received from Vienna the Carlists are actively on foot, and are not only supported, but well supplied with funds.

BRUSSELS, Sept. 8.—The *Hotie Belgic* declares King Leopold cannot act as arbitrator between Spain and Germany, because Belgium formerly negotiated for the purchase of one of the Philippine islands.

LONDON, Sept. 8.—The German gunboat which occupied Yap was the *Hyna*, Captain Langemak, from Australia. She carries four guns and 90 men.

PARIS, Sept. 8.—Ex-Queen Isabella of Spain is here awaiting the issue of the contention between Spain and Germany. She has frequent conferences with Prince Hohenlohe, the German Ambassador, her old friend. She hopes much from his mediation. A party is forming in favor of placing the four-year-old Princess of Asturias on the throne of Spain with Gen. Salanueva as regent. The General is the most popular man in Spain.

MR. STEAD'S TRIAL.

ELIZA ARMSTRONG'S MOTHER BADGERED BY THE COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENCE.

LONDON, Sept. 10.—Public interest grows intense as the Armstrong case progresses, and the Bow Street Police Court was, if possible more crowded to day than yesterday. Mrs. Jarrett again occupied a bad audience in the prisoner's dock. She had exchanged her ulster for a gaudy Scotch plaid shawl, and she prayed frequently during the proceedings. Mr. Stead and his sub-editor Mr. Jacques, Bramwell Booth, Mrs. Coombe and the midwife Maury once more adorne the bench in front of Mrs. Jarrett. The public in court frequently interrupted the witnesses with questions.

NEARLY THE WHOLE OF THE DAY WAS TAKEN UP BY THE CROSS-EXAMINATION OF ELIZA ARMSTRONG AND HER MOTHER.

The great feature of the afternoon was a wordy duel between Mr. Russell and Mrs. Armstrong, the interesting Eliza's mother. She is a rough, bold, quick-tongued woman, who does not understand fine phrases. Mr. Russell, as is well known, rather affects choice language. Consequently half of his questions were pure Hebrew to the witness, who lost her temper during the cross-examination and shocked the learned counsel several times by the vigor of her replies. Mr. Russell was a trifle too subtle at first, and Magistrate Vaughan seemed to sympathize with his exasperated victim.

AFTER SHE HAD BEEN SAVAGELY ASKED AND HAD protested against being badgered with questions which, to use her idiomatic expression, "Ain't nothin' to do with the case," the worthy magistrate rather tartly instructed the counsel that he had better alter his plan of cross-examination. Mr. Russell, with an indignant grace, submitted. Much amusement was caused soon after when Mrs. Armstrong, suddenly catching Mrs. Jarrett's sanctimonious eye, shook her fist at her, and expressed a fervent wish that she "only 'ad 'er outside for five minutes."