

## THE THREATENED AGGRESSION.

subject, jealous for the honor of his Queen, and faithful to the interests of his adopted country. Few, we think will cavil at his views thus publicly expressed. Whilst we on our part are proud to accept them as our own.

His Lordship opened the Toronto Spring Assizes on Monday the 19th of March, and in his charge to the Grand Jury, after referring to their duties and commenting upon the calendar placed in his hands, spoke as follows:—

As a general rule courts and judges abstain from making observations to grand jurors on public or political matters not immediately connected with the administration of public justice. Occasionally exceptions arise. Thus in 1837 a painful duty in this respect was cast upon the judges, to which I am under no necessity to make and gladly abstain from making further allusion. A new era has dawned upon us since and the events of that period are now no more than matters for the historian. At a later period the public mind was much agitated by a so called question of annexation—and that, too, has fallen into oblivion, or if remembered by those who then favored it, it is, I apprehend, with a devout feeling of thankfulness that it has been irrevocably abandoned.

A third exception presents itself now. No one who passes through our streets can doubt to what I allude, and few I trust will think that it is out of place for me to offer some observations in regard to it. It is impossible to make an inquiry of the most superficial nature into the cause of what we see around us, without having our attention forced as it were upon Ireland and its condition—and we cannot avoid looking back far beyond the events of the present time to understand the pretext out of which has arisen the crisis apparently impending.

From the reign of the first Plantagenet—through the times of the Tudors—under the unsparing sword of Cromwell down to the culminating victory gained by William of Nassau, Ireland has been a battle field. Wars of invasion and territorial conquest—wars between the ancient races and the descendants or successors of the invaders, wars to maintain or extend the ascendancy of the crown of England, wars of dynasty—the latter more especially, though it was not confined to them, embittered or inflamed by differences of religion—successively wasted the land and prevented the prosperity arising from the cultivation of peaceful and industrial pursuits. And since then, down to a modern period—among some sources of active discontent, after breaking out into open violence—and among

complaints not without reasonable foundation—the legal disqualification of men on account of their religious opinions held a prominent place. Since the change of law in that particular, and down to the present time, a very different course of policy has been followed—having for its leading object the promotion of the material prosperity of the whole people, without reference to differences of race or of religious opinions. But, during that time also, the impatient folly of some the perverse malevolence of others and an almost wilful blindness to the good that has been done, as well as to the promise for the future which had thus been given, has checked progress, and has, at the present, forced the adoption of repressive measures to avert from Ireland the horrors of civil warfare.

That a conspiracy—formidable by its numbers though not extending to the classes possessed of education, intelligence or property—exists against the government of that country is now beyond doubt. That such conspiracy has been encouraged if not originated, fostered if not created, by men of Irish birth or of Irish descent resident in the United States is brought home to our conviction by the daily record of passing events; and that the inevitable result must be prejudicial to the peace and prosperity of Ireland is as obvious as the necessity for vigorous measures of repression and restraint. Nevertheless, we might, here in Canada, whilst earnestly desiring the maintenance of the established government in Ireland, and that the mad effort to dismember the United Kingdom might meet with speedy and ignominious failure, have thought ourselves beyond the immediate reach of the threatened conflict. We might expect to hear its echo, but not that we should be made parties to it in our own land. For, admitting, for the argument sake, the existence of injustice and oppression which is advanced as the justification of this conspiracy—no such discontent exists or ever has existed here. Canada, among whose most valued inhabitants are many of Irish birth and descent, is no more responsible than the United States of America in which a very large number of the Irish become domiciled, for any of the causes, real or fictitious, which are made the manifesto of these conspirators—and I firmly believe that few indeed, if even one of all the Irish residents in Canada, no matter what his creed, or party, are so insensible to the advantages of our present form of government as to desire a change, least of all by armed invaders. And yet such is the danger that seems to be imminent.

It is not war, as that term is understood in the law of nations, that threatens; war tempered by modern civilization by a regard to considerations