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Vestry

THE HOME RULE BILL.

Earl Salisbury's Deliverance Before
the Primrose League.

On Wednesday, April 19, Lord Salisbury presided, in his capacity as Grand Master, over the annual meeting of the Primrose League, which was held in Covent Garden Theatre, London. There was a crowded audience. After Sir W. Marriott, Chancellor of the League, had made a statement as to its progress and work during the past year, Lord Salisbury, who, on rising, was received with loud and prolonged cheers, said:—

Knights and Dames, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen.—I again have the honor of welcoming you to one of these great assemblies which mark the constant and signal progress of the Primrose League. (Cheers.) We have just witnessed a ceremony testifying to the energy and the public spirit of some of the most distinguished among us, but that recognition was not intended for them alone. We are well conscious that throughout this body there are numbers to whose self-sacrificing zeal during the present crisis England has owed much, and on whose patriotism in the future we rely. (Hear, hear.) The difficulty which has arisen in this country from the suffrage being suddenly given to a class who before had not paid much attention to public affairs has been enormously mitigated by the efforts of the members of the Primrose League. It has been their energy and wisdom that have spread sound ideas among the population, and although at the recent trial our efforts were not rewarded by absolute victory, we know that in many respects they answered our highest expectations. (Cheers.)

THE RESULT OF THE GENERAL ELECTION.

Since I last met you we have had a general election, and on the whole that general election has resulted in a defeat of the Unionist party. But that is no ground for discouragement—on the contrary, there are circumstances in it which give us reason for the brightest hope of the future. (Cheers.) In the first place, we know that the principles of the Primrose League represent the principles of England by an overwhelming majority. (Hear, hear.) We know that our principles are in accordance with the principles of the majority of Great Britain. (Hear, hear.) And if we have been beaten, we have been beaten by influences which we feel the progress of intelligence must dislodge and by organizations which cannot long hold their strength in a free country. (Cheers.) But when it is said that we have been beaten at the last election, take care that these words convey to your minds a just estimate of what has really taken place. We are accustomed to speak of the country as a whole, and as though the country as a whole at the last election went from one side to the other—"like pigs in a gale of wind" (cheers and laughter), and as though, having voted for Union in 1886, it had voted for Home Rule in 1892. Of course, if such a phenomenon had occurred, it would have been unexampled in the history of the world, and it would have been a cause of great discouragement to us. But what has really happened, when we get away from metaphor and get to facts? It has been shown that, if only 800 voters in England and Scotland had voted differently from what they did there would have been no Home Rule majority in the House of Commons. (Cheers.) That bit of luck, however, we must accept as the fortune of war, and I am not complaining of it; but I say that a victory of that kind carries very little moral prestige with it. (Cheers.) Why, as far as those 800 are concerned, we could beat them here to-day, and we may hope that as time goes on we shall be able to make such an impression even upon their obdurate convictions as will get rid of the Home Rule majority altogether. (Cheers.) But again I must remind you that it is only these 800 voters that we are fighting, and I do not imagine that that number shows any great and overwhelming preponderance of public opinion in the two islands in favor of this project of Home Rule. (Cheers.) Well, at all events, this majority is not a formidable one, and we must look at it with this single view, that it is our business to get rid of it. (Cheers and laughter.) And I do not think that as far as we can look into the future our chances of doing so can be treated as insignificant. (Hear, hear.) In the first place, when I hear that in the House of Commons and elsewhere some people treat the result of the general election as a great and decisive decision of the people of the United Kingdom on a great question set before them, I think that such people forget the history of majorities in the House of Commons, and they forget that that admirable machine, like many other machines, works upon the principle of the pendulum. Thus at the beginning of a Parliament there is a majority for one party, and there is a strong probability that before the end of that Parliament there will be a majority in the constituencies in favor of the other party. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) Just look back a few years and reflect upon what has happened. The general election of 1860 resulted in a heavy majority for the Gladstonians. They reigned for six years, and then in 1874 a heavy majority went over for the Conservatives. They reigned for six years, and then in 1880 a heavy majority went over for the Gladstonians. They reigned, with a short interval, for six years, and in 1886 a heavy majority went over for the Conservatives. They reigned for six years, and in 1892 a not very heavy majority has gone over to the Gladstonians. Of course, we may be drawing an induction from insufficient premises, but when you have watched the

swinging of the pendulum for some time I think you would be justified in saying that it would continue that motion in the future. (Hear, hear.) If that be the case, it is possible that as the pendulum again swings we shall, in addition to all other influences—which I believe are very powerful—working for us, obtain the benefit of this natural movement of the constituencies.

THE DUTY OF THE PRIMROSE LEAGUE.

That points out to the Primrose League what it has to do. I am told by the other side—I know nothing of the matter myself—that the House of Lords will reject the Home Rule Bill. (Loud cheers.) I dare say that they are right in that proposition (cheers), or I should not have ventured on any prophecy myself. But then they tell us that in that case they are going on and will introduce the Bill again. Now, here I do venture to prophesy. I venture to say that if the House of Lords rejects the Bill a first time and the Government introduces the measure a second time without a dissolution, the House of Lords will certainly reject it again. (Cheers.) I only mention this matter in order to express a hope that they may do as they propose, because the longer time that elapses before the next general election the better it will be for us. (Hear, hear.) I do hope that they will go on with futile attempts at impossible legislation until we have had time to impress upon the minds of the constituencies of the country the real effects, the real truths, and the real interests which are at issue in this great secular struggle which we are now going through. (Hear, hear.) And here is the duty of the Primrose League. It is their great, their splendid function to carry light into dark places; it is their duty to tell the truth to those who have no other means of ascertaining it; it is their duty to scatter and disperse that mass of pestilential falsehood with which our adversaries surround all the questions of the day. (Hear, hear.) Time would fail me and I should be indicting upon you a great deal of what you have already read in the newspapers if I were to go into the details of this miserable measure, but I want to point out to you some particular points of it that are worthy of your study for the purpose of enlightening the electorate. And first I would commend to you the question of finance. The Home Secretary laughed at us the other night because we said both England and Ireland would lose under the operation of the finance of the Bill. I am surprised that any man who must be familiar with legal and commercial circumstances has had any difficulty in believing in that probability. I have often heard of partnerships which, as long as they kept together were rich, but which, when they fell apart and went into liquidation, turned out to be worth nothing at all. (Hear, hear.) The destruction of credit which will result from separation will destroy wealth on both sides, will reduce Ireland to something like bankruptcy, and will lay a heavy burden upon Great Britain. (Cheers.) For myself, I have my doubts whether the finance in this Bill is intended seriously. By that I do not mean that it is not intended that it should pass, but that it is proposed with a perfect consciousness that it cannot possibly last. (Hear, hear.)

THE "PLETHORA OF MONEY" ARGUMENT.

Mr. Gladstone undertook the other day to prove to the Irish that there would be what he called a "plethora of money" in consequence of the passing of this Bill, and he proved it in this way. He said:—Now it costs £1 for every inhabitant of Ireland to employ their Civil Service; whereas if you paid them according to the rate in England you could do it for 10s.; therefore, there is a way to wealth open to the Irish; reduce the cost of your Civil Service by 10s., and you will be as rich as Croesus. (Laughter.) There has been a perfect flight of financiers to prove that Mr. Gladstone's facts were utterly wrong, but they belong to the poetical and dreamy class of impressions which we see beset his mind with reference to Mr. Parnell and the characters of Irish members. (Laughter.) We must carefully separate Mr. Gladstone's dream from Mr. Gladstone's facts, but assuming that he is right, I want you just to look for a moment at this prospect of wealth that he offers to the Irish. Having paid £1 a head for your Civil Service, he says, pay now 10s., and you will be very rich. That means that you must dismiss half of the employees or else reduce their wages by half in the present amount. That chance has any Government of doing that in any country? And have you ever heard that the peculiarities of the Irish are such as to make it particularly easy in that country? (Laughter.) Why, the proposition would reduce Ireland to civil war, lay alone the question of Ulster altogether. Now this means what, I believe, the Irish members know perfectly well, and which I suspect, they will shortly say, that the financial proposals of the Bill mean

BANKRUPTCY IN TWO YEARS FOR IRELAND.

Well, where will England be? What are the means given for contributing what Ireland owes us for the common defence of the Empire? The selection of that plan is my reason for thinking that no plan is really intended or contemplated by the Bill. In 1886 it was proposed that England should take her contribution out of the Irish Exchequer, which, supposing she found it there, would no doubt have been a very effective arrangement; but now another arrangement is proposed—that England shall have the right to take the Customs duties. Those Customs duties will be Ireland's contribution. Shortening that word, it will be very soon Ireland's tribute. Ireland will see two-and-a-half millions of money going away to England while she is on the borders of bankruptcy. Do you suppose the Government of Ireland or those who depend on them will help the payment of that tribute? (Cheers.) Do you suppose it will be a popular thing among the Irish population? The Customs-house officer is never a popular official, and if he is not supported by anybody on land, if the policeman looks the other way and the magistrate finds infinite difficulties in co-acting, it will be impossible, simply impossible, for the Customs-house officer to execute his duty. The coast of Ireland is from the smuggler's point of view an ideal coast. Goods could be run in anywhere, and if the land authorities do not back up your Customs-house officers that tribute of two-and-a-half millions to which we look in order to pay Ireland's share of the common defence—and it is a very small contribution—will vanish into thin air, and the two-and-a-half millions will have to be found by the population of Great Britain by the income tax or by the tea duty. (Hear, hear.) My belief is the Irish members know this perfectly well, and it is for that reason they assent to this financial arrangement of the Bill.

A BIG AND LITTLE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Then take another peculiarity which I hope you will press upon those with whom you come in contact—the extraordinary hodge-podge which Mr. Gladstone has made of the House of Commons in this Bill. The proposal is, that on measures which concern Great Britain the Irish members should not vote, and on other measures they should vote. Does it not occur to him that he is getting rid entirely of that power which has placed the House of Commons where it is—the power of the purse? The purse means the Estimates and the Ways and Means for this island. There are no Estimates and Ways and Means for Ireland, because they are independent. Therefore, everything that concerns money will be a purely British concern, and the House of Commons will be in two different forms. It will be a big House of Commons containing the Irish, and a little House of Commons without the Irish. The little House of Commons will have exclusive power over the purse. The big House of Commons will have nothing to do with the purse, and the big House of Commons may vote the Government out of office if it likes, but if the Government chooses to say "All that we care about is the power of the purse," it may remain in office in spite of the big House of Commons, relying on the power of the little House of Commons. There disappears the power of the purse, on which the position of the House of Commons under our Constitution depends. Mr. Gladstone, looking about for a brick to make up the fantasmagoric pile on which he is bent, has knocked out the keystone from the arch of the British Constitution. (Cheers.) Now see how this odd arrangement of the big and little House of Commons will work. Suppose the House of Commons remains exactly as it is, and that the Bill passes. Well, I shall say, "I told you so," and that there will be trouble in Ulster—very great trouble indeed. I will not repeat what has been said by the Duke of Devonshire and Mr. Balfour (cheers) further than to say I heartily agree with everything of it. (Cheers.) But there is trouble in Ulster. Well, the Ulster people are a very poor people if they cannot beat down the local Nationalist police, and there will come a question of summoning the troops. The big House of Commons, with the Irishmen there, will vote indecisively that the troops be sent, but the little House of Commons, that has the power of the purse, will say, "No, thank you." (Laughter and cheers.) They will say, "Before you send a soldier into Ireland you must have a vote of the House of Commons which is concerned with British affairs," and my belief is that if you have the present House of Commons, or any patriotic British House of Commons, not a soldier would be allowed to go to Ireland on such a mission. (Cheers.) There, however, you see the silliness of attempting to work the British Constitution with a big House of Commons and a little House of Commons. And the same thing will happen vice versa. Supposing we had an Egyptian war, and supposing the Irish members, with that effusive sympathy which they have shown for every nation except the British, supporting the war, would say, "The war is a highly struggling to be free," and you shall not attack them; but the little House of Commons will say, "Well, you do as you please; but if you do attack them, here is the money." (Laughter.) My impression is the British Ministers would do exactly as they pleased, and the comparison between the vote of two Houses of Commons would make a corresponding confusion in all that we did on any side in any quarter of the globe. (Cheers.) Mr. Gladstone consoles himself in a characteristic way. He says he hopes the Irish members won't come very often. (Laughter.) Well, everybody must sympathize with him in that hope. (Cheers and laughter.) But still it is right to look forward to possible contingencies the other way, and if you are going to have payment of members, and if the payment of members depends upon attendance, my impression is the Irish will attend a good deal. (Laughter and cheers.) But the atrocity of this scheme is deeper. These men will be in the House of Commons without any responsibility whatever. The constituencies on whom they depend will not care two straws about the matters with which they deal. They will not be their masters. No vote that they can give will directly affect the Irish constituency, and the Irish member will be absolutely free. And what will he do with that freedom? He will sell it. I do not mean any coarse or sordid imputation. I do not mean to say he will sell it for his own personal advantage; but for the advantage of the community to which he belongs. He will make his vote in Parliament depend on what the Government will promise him of the things which Ireland desires of England. (Hear, hear.) Want those things will be a leave to your imagination. Difficulties of account to be settled in the Irish direction, loans to be raised for Ireland by England's credit, and sundry other things—matters concerning those lamentable religious differences, on which I do not wish to touch more than I can help—all these things will be matters which Irish members will desire, which English members will be able to give, and for which Irish members by their free, unfettered, irresponsible vote will be perfectly competent to pay. Well, I ask you again, is that finally? Do you imagine any country in the world could be run under a system of that kind? Does it not mean revision at an early date, and revision in a state of things in which the Irish will be absolute masters and may demand of us almost any terms they please? I am not surprised at the Irish accepting the Bill. The first bite of the enemy may not be very sweet, but the second bite will be all that they can desire. (Laughter.) And of course we shall lose that one consideration that is perpetually living before our eyes. We are told, "Only assent to this Bill and you will get rid of all Irish questions from the House of Commons." You will not get rid of them, you will multiply them infinitely; they will occupy your whole time and dominate all your politics, only instead of your arguing, I will not say as masters, but, at all events, in a position of approximate equality, you will argue as victims and as subject to their will, and as bound to do whatever they may insist upon. You will be told we shall get rid of the Irish trouble. I commend to you the answer; I recommend you to point out, as I have shown, how the proposed financial arrangements will be a heavy burden to the English taxpayer, how the proposed constitutional alteration will shatter the Parliamentary system of which they are so proud. But there is worse behind.

THE U. S. PARIS CONSULATE.

Samuel F. Moss, the Indianapolis Editor Named as Consul-General to Paris.

The Consul General at Paris, Mr. Samuel F. Moss, of Indiana, is widely known throughout the West as editor of the Indianapolis Sentinel, and as an active and influential supporter of Mr. Cleveland. The appointment gives great satisfaction in Indiana as the Hoosier Democrats view Mr. Moss in equal confidence and esteem. Advice from St. Paul says: The farmers of Minnesota and the Dakotas are pretty nearly discouraged over the outlook for crops. Not an acre of grain has been sown in North Dakota, nor at any point in Minnesota North of St. Cloud, and there is no prospect that any will be sown in the next few days. It began snowing last Wednesday and an average of eighteen inches fell in twenty-four hours. Since that date it has rained almost continuously in Northern Minnesota, around Crookston, Fisher and many other Red River Valley points. Thousands of acres of farm lands have been covered into lakes by overflowing streams, and all talk of planting in a crop is out of the question.

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A German authority says that almost a third of humanity speak the Chinese language; that the Hindoo languages are spoken by 89,000,000, while the German is spoken by more than 100,000,000, the Russian by 57,000,000 tongues, and the Spanish by 48,000,000.



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THE PROTEST AND THE ANSWER.
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