

with Ireland. Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox had a clear grasp of the way to deal with Ireland, but the Nottinghams and Norths and such men were utterly incapable of dealing either with Ireland or with the Empire generally. I have here a telegram which I saw yesterday in the newspaper, and I was sorry to read that Lord Salisbury spoke as follows:—

“He denied that the Cowper Commission gave the fall in prices as the sole reason for the tenants’ inability to pay their rents. If the rents were revised now there would be no argument with which to resist the constant demands that would be made for revision upon the slightest grounds. Why should a tenant who entered into a bargain which turned out unprofitable be differently treated from a person in any other business? When able to pay their debts they should do so. When it was impossible to pay, society recognised the case and provided relief for the insolvent. He thought the precedent applied amply to the present case.”

Now, Sir, it may seem presumption on my part, but I have often heard Lord Salisbury speak, I have studied that eminent statesman a little, and I venture to say that that is a very unsympathetic and very unstatesmanlike way of regarding this question. I think, moreover, that the present situation, the present opportunity, emphasises the great loss which England and the Empire sustained—to say nothing of the great loss the Conservative party in England sustained, in the death of Lord Beaconsfield. They were keeping his Primrose Day a few days ago, and that is only another instance, to which I could add hundreds, that you may build monuments to the prophets but you cannot catch their inspiration. Now, what is the meaning of our debating this question here to-day? I believe it was not before our constituents during the late election. What is the meaning of the Ontario Legislature discussing it? What is the meaning of the Quebec Legislature discussing it? What is the meaning of resolutions being passed in various assemblies, a large portion of those assemblies hardly caring one pin about Ireland? The fact is—and that fact had better be faced, if we are to understand the situation, and if we are to assume that attitude which is wise under the circumstances—the fact is that the poor, despised, down-trodden Irish Celt of half a century ago has triumphed. Beaten on the battle-field now by more skilful forces, now by larger numbers, treated now cruelly and now a little kindly by England—if he had been treated as cruelly as some desired he might have been exterminated, and if he had been treated more kindly he might have been reconciled; but treated as he has been he has remained unreconciled, and meanwhile what has happened? The battle has been transferred from the battle-field to the cradle, and the pure and therefore fruitful Irish woman has conquered. The cradle has won, and there is now a greater Ireland here. A Cabinet Minister has used the phrase that you have not only outside Britain a greater Britain, but you have outside Ireland a greater Ireland; and the significance of this debate, if it has any genuine significance that it is desirable we should lay to heart—I am not talking about looking after a vote here and a vote there—the genuine significance of this debate lies in that fact. I want to know if there is any general moral that an earnest man can take from this debate. Sir, there is, and it is this: to see and acknowledge the fact that while hon. members dislike the question, while some would like to see it kicked from the floor of the House, nevertheless the question is discussed, although it does not belong in any way to our business. What is the meaning of this fact? Its meaning is this: that this man that thirty, forty or fifty years ago was despised and trodden under foot, has become a power; it means that he insists on being considered, and that you have to consider him. Mr. Froude points out how the effort was made from time to time to decelticise Ireland, and points out also that it always failed. At the time Lord John Russell’s Encumbered Estates Bill was passed—a measure which though I do not say it was an unwise measure, was certainly, passed at that particular

time, a cruel and short-sighted act—at that time I find that the London *Times*, the Thunderer, was writing about what that Act would do. It said this Act would give you Scotch and English tenants instead of Irish tenants; it would give you Scotch and English landlords instead of Irish landlords, and in a few years a Celtic Irishman would be as rare in Connemara as on the banks of the Manhattan. They were going to decelticise Ireland by means of the law of supply and demand. I remember that in 1882 I had a conversation with one of the most eminent men of the United States, whom I met on a train, and who was then aspiring to a high office. He told me his plans for annexing Canada to the United States, and his chief plan was that he had a millionaire, a man of English manners, one who had lived largely on the continent of Europe, and he said, I am going to send him to Ottawa, as a sort of diplomatist, and my directions to him will be to out-dinner Rideau Hall—he must beat the Governor General hollow in the matter of dinners. I said to him: Are you going to annex five millions of people with a gridiron? So these people were going to decelticise Ireland by the law of supply and demand. I need hardly say that experiment failed, and we are now face to face with the fact that we have, outside Ireland, a greater Ireland taking a deep interest in her affairs, though I am bound to say, not always a wise interest. But you must remember what I have shown you happened; and remember also that laws existed almost within living memory which kept the people of Ireland in ignorance. Remember all that, and remember too as this same eminent writer, Mr. Froude, lays down, you cannot, whether as a nation or an individual, commit a crime but you become a debtor—he puts it—a debtor to nature; I prefer to go higher than nature, and say that you become a debtor to the Power that rules this world, and the time will come sooner or later when the bill will have to be paid. Any such policy as was pursued towards Ireland would have been all right if you could have trammelled up the consequences. If the blow then given could have been the be-all and the end-all. But in these cases you teach bloody instructions which, being taught, return to plague the inventors, and by investigating and brooding on those wrongs, many of these wilder spirits in the United States have been inflamed. When I read what they say and do I feel humiliated as an Irishman. But we must remember what were the circumstances which are responsible for this result. And in this relation I believe it would be a good thing to have a local Assembly, I believe it would be a good thing to have a local Assembly that would give the Irish people the excitement of local politics, and would help to develop the country. In that way I believe a blow would be struck at an agitation which is educating the rising generation in Ireland to be unfit for everything like peaceful and industrial life. The hon. Member for North Simcoe said he was making an unpopular speech. I do not know whether I have been making a popular or an unpopular speech. I have not been aiming at making a popular or an unpopular speech. I have often spoken to my countrymen on questions affecting Ireland, and they know well that I have never flattered them, for they know that I love them too much to flatter them. I prefer to tell them their faults, and for my part I do not care one straw whether my speech is popular or unpopular, provided I tell the truth. As the great Florentine says:

“Pur che mia coscienza non mi garra,
Che alla fortuna, come vuol, son presto.”

The meaning of which in plain words is this, that provided I satisfy my conscience, provided I have the self-approving hour, I care very little; I think that is above applause, and it is a barrier against disapproval. In case the amendment should not be carried, I will, should I have an opportunity, present an amendment to the House that will ex-