

MR. HEALY'S SPEECH.

Charges Against the Liberals.

The Claims of the Christian Brothers.

The speech delivered by Mr. Healy at Crossmaglen which caused such a sensation among distrustful Tories was called forth by an address of welcome read by the people of the neighborhood. After making some references to the kindness of the address, Mr. Healy said: There is in Ireland the outstanding question of the settlement of the Christian Brothers' claims. There are in England large questions affecting the rights of our fellow countrymen and fellow Catholics. Scandal was given on a recent occasion by the action of some gentlemen in reference to this question of religious education. Now, let me say as a layman that I take a view with regard to the question of religious education and its effect on the government of men somewhat, it may be, of a civil character, as distinct from the views which you, very rev. and rev. friends, may hold. It is this—If the State sets the seal of secularism upon public education, paid for by the taxpayer, it cannot complain afterwards of the Anarchist and the Dynamitard. Let the people of any country be brought up in a negation of God and of the teachings of conscience and the State can have nothing to rely upon afterward but the policemen and the convict cell and the penal hulks for the enforcement of its laws. We saw through a century of strife and bloodshed the attempt to found a Republic in France. We saw the thousands of men who were sent to the scaffold, the millions of men who fell in battle to sustain the Republican idea. And then when, after a century of strife, and after all the sacrifices that the French Republicans made to attain their ideal of government, what was the result? The godless system of education which they established nursed as its product men to fling bombs in the faces of their Republican Chamber of Deputies, and we saw another of the products of their godless code stab to the heart the President of the French Republic. Therefore I say that those politicians who strive for the attainment of secular liberty are laying a very poor foundation for the government of men by divorcing from the minds of youth the sanctions of faith, which, in my judgment, are a necessary element to good citizenship in building up a State. Hence I viewed with anxiety the action of those who, when authority, acting within its jurisdiction—as I conceive Cardinal Vaughan strictly acted on this question of education—put forward his views not as a politician, not seeking as I believe, to effect any political design, but simply carrying out the Gospel and the mandate of his Master with a view to provide that the children of four millions of people—a population nearly as large as that of Ireland—should not be deprived of knowledge of the tenets of Christianity common to both Protestant and to Catholic—the ordinary simple formulas of our common creed—that he should without provocation be assailed by Irish politicians on the ground that his action was inconvenient to a political party. After having thought over the matter in the months that have gone by since this scandal arose, and after I had ample time to form my conclusions and having remained hitherto silent I now declare that I condemn such procedure and will have neither part nor lot in such policies. (Applause.) Perhaps this expression of opinion will be called "dissension." If so, I would ask is there no dissension on the part of those who cast an outrage upon Cardinal Vaughan? (Hear, hear.) Is there no dissension in creating scandal in the minds of millions of their fellow-countrymen by violently assailing the educational position of a Prince of our

Faith, and is there only dissension and disunion when, not upon an eternal issue but upon a matter of ephemeral politics, we venture to disagree either with the procedure of the chairman of the Irish Party or any one of his colleagues of the Parliamentary Committee? (Hear, hear.) In Ireland we have unsettled in our midst the question of the Christian Brothers. For nearly two and a half years that matter has been allowed to remain upon the shelf, and it might moulder there still so far as some of our daily journals are concerned—Catholic papers whose duty it should be to keep such questions, with fixed bayonets, in front of the eyes of the governors and rulers of this land. It began by the late Conservative Chief Secretary, Mr. Jackson, addressing a letter to the Irish National Board of Education. He requested them, in view of the passing of the Compulsory Education Act, to devise some means whereby these Christian Schools, which provide for the education of so large a body of humble people, should be enabled to draw some amount of State payment proportionate to the secular service which they render in the ordinary lay education of the country. That step was taken upon a Tory initiative. It was not due in any way to the action of the present Government. How is the National Board made up? It consists not of Land Leaguers, not of tenant farmers, not of Nationalists, it is composed of the highest judges of the land and of the Fellows and Provost of Trinity College, of Presbyterian ministers, of Protestant ministers, of Privy Counsellors and all of those who have the confidence and have received the rewards and honors of the State. There is not upon it a Catholic priest or a Catholic bishop, and the majority of it are not Catholics. Accordingly it was not, as you may suppose, a very revolutionary or Papistical body which met in council to discuss the claims of the Christian Brothers. And having met they made a proposition, on the motion, I believe, of Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, a Conservative and Protestant judge, a man so Conservative and so Protestant that he refused, as you have seen, to agree the other day with a Catholic judge, Judge O'Brien, on the question of the Erasmus Smith Schools as to how their endowments should be divided amongst the tenantry of the Erasmus Smith estates. And Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, and the Provost of Trinity College, and other men of state having agreed that some accommodation was essential for the Catholic teaching body, they made a recommendation to the Lord Lieutenant. But meantime there had been a change of Government. Had the Tory Lord Lieutenant remained in office, the small satisfaction to Catholic claims and Catholic teaching, awarded by the concession of the National Board would have sanctioned without day's delay. But a Home Rule Government had come into office, and almost the first official act of the new government was to negative and nullify the decision of the Protestants on the Board of National Education to give a small measure of satisfaction to the Christian Brothers of Ireland. (Cries of "Shame.") Amazed and appalled at this act of the Executive administration, the National Board met for a second time, and a second time they put forward a scheme of, I believe a still more limited character, with a view to providing for the necessities of public life in Ireland. For as you know, the Compulsory Education Act had been suspended owing to the paralysis brought about by the failure to meet the case of the Christian Brothers. The National Board, this Conservative and almost reactionary body once more formulated a scheme, and once more humbly laid it at the Viceregal feet, and once more the Executive cancelled, effaced, and destroyed the plan adopted by the National Board. And now for two years

the question has been allowed to remain festering and in abeyance, and we have been told time after time that it was on the verge of settlement. I have only to say that if the tables had been turned, if the positions had been reversed if the action taken against the decision of the National Board, the decision of men like Chief Baron Pallas, Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, and the Provost of Trinity College, had been the action not of a Home Rule and Liberal Administration but had been the action of the Government of Mr. Balfour, every parish in Ireland would have rung with denunciation of such conduct, and the Irish Party would have been deemed unworthy of its representative character if they had not brought the question instantly, substantively, and effectually under the notice of the House of Commons and of Parliament. (Hear, hear.) That has not been done, but I have not yet lost hope that some measure of accommodation will be proposed. There are many who think that the lapse of years brings about possibilities of appeasement, and therefore, that no time may after all be lost by what has occurred. I trust it will be so, and that if in the end it should be found that the Christian Brothers and their pupils receive a larger measure of redress and of reform in consequence of the delay, we will be able to say that "out of evil cometh good," and we shall be very happy to forget the incident, and be prepared to turn over a new leaf in our minds. Although we have remained silent hitherto in regard to such transactions, we retain our opinion upon them, and we retain our opinion upon the policy which has made them possible. Side by side with it we see such instances of administration as those which at this moment crum institutions like the asylum boards with the enemies of the country, when by a stroke of the Executive pen National bodies could be constituted. They deny us such a reform of the grand jury system as could be brought about by the appointment of sheriffs, and seem to think that the creation of half a dozen magistrates here and there is a sufficient reward for the sacrifices and exertions which you in your localities have made in fighting Coercion and in returning a Liberal Government to power. We don't ask anywhere for anything except this, that in the appointment of local bodies local satisfaction should be given to the prevailing opinions of the people. (Hear, hear.) If these people be in the county Antrim or county Down, let Protestant opinion and Protestant boards dominate. (Hear, hear.) I would be no party to appointing, say, on the lunatic board of the county of Antrim or the county of Down a majority of Nationalists, because I believe that would be doing outrage to the local sentiment of these places (hear, hear), and similarly if I were dealing with the county of Cork or the county of Tipperary or Clare, I would denounce as an outrage upon local sentiment, upon local taxpayers, as an outrage, the appointment of a majority of any kind except of the local feeling of the district. (Hear, hear.) A laughable compromise appears to have been effected in many places by appointing one half of each side; in other words, of creating a temporary paralysis on the boards of these institutions, such as we saw in the county of Carlow recently, where after three meetings and six months had elapsed the governors of the Carlow asylum were not able to agree about the appointment of a doctor—an official so necessary for the care of the insane—and where in consequence the appointment fell into the hands of the Lord Lieutenant and had to be made upon his nomination. What a state of things, gentlemen, supposing you were in England and had the Sovereign at Windsor or Osborne or at Balmoral having to be solemnly advised of the Privy Council about the

appointment of a doctor to the lunatic asylum at Bedlam or Colney Hatch. (Laughter.) And yet what you have only to state to show the absurdity of it in England is a commonplace of Irish administration (hear, hear), and, therefore, I take my stand upon the right of the Irish people to receive from this Government, not as a matter of favour but as a matter of right, that satisfaction and recognition of their local claims to which they are entitled. (Hear, hear.) It is our people who pay the taxes for the grand juries and for the asylum boards, and it is they should have a full representation. (Hear, hear.) The landlords pay but little even of these taxes, and, therefore, are entitled to a very small representation. We pay all the cess and half the poor rates, and, therefore, our people are entitled to a system whereby full efficient representation should be given to them upon these boards. In England the Government passed an act last year whereby poor law guardians are to be elected by ballot on a system of one man one vote, and abolishing proxies. And, forsooth, it is revolutionary to demand the extension of similar measures to Ireland. (Cheers.) I stand, then, upon what I conceive to be in this matter the solid basis of precedent and common sense. I know the rags and tatters of local life and the scamy side of local administration in Ireland. We have groaned under it long enough, and the people having made great exertions and endured sacrifices, imprisonments and sufferings to bring into office the Liberal administration, we are entitled to believe that the Irish Party will see that the administration meet the demands and recognize the rights of their constituents. (Applause.) For I think it only justice to the Chief Secretary to say that, so far as I know, these matters have not been pressed upon him officially and formally by those whose duty it was to have made the necessary representations. I believe no demand has been made for the appointment of sheriffs. I know that no representation has been made on the question of the composition of the Asylum Boards. I don't know what has been done, but I believe very little has been done to bring the views of the party as such to bear upon the Government in the matter of the Christian Brothers, but in my judgment these are matters which might have occupied our consideration quite as well as the composition of the directorate of the Freeman's Journal Board. (Hear, hear.) Thanking you, then, Canon Hoey and gentlemen, for the kindness of your expressions towards me, and trusting that my action and course may continue to meet with your approval, I give you this assurance, that I will strive so to work as that I may retain the confidence, not only of my own immediate constituents for the time being, but of the gallant men who strangled Toryism and Whiggery in Monaghan twelve years ago. (Applause.)

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