

were passed by the English Parliament in defence of English rule in Ireland, and they would have been passed as penal laws with equal harshness and severity whatever had been the religion of the Celtic population, if only that population had risen against the authority of England.

If the confiscation of the property of the rebel land-owners was unjust, undo it all—(cheers):

If, in the name of justice, you are to trace back so far the roots of things in Irish history—if you are to make one revolution in the sacred name of justice—then in the name of justice also give back to the descendants of the owners of these confiscated estates what you took from them. (Cheers.) But do not mock them by telling them, “Protestant ascendancy in land is an evil thing in Ireland, and how shall we deal with it? Why, nine-tenths of the land being in the hands of the Protestant landlord and one-tenth in the hands of the clergyman, we will satisfy your demand for justice by ousting from his possession that one proprietor who is most popular, most constantly resident, and least offensive, and we will retain in all the bitter tenacity of his original tenure the proprietor who is most offensive to you, and whose possessions you most covet.” (Cheers.) Do noble lords imagine that the Irish people will be satisfied with that? Do you, having to deal with the most quickwitted people in Europe—people whose eyes are very closely fixed on this question—do you believe that they will be anything but bitterly disappointed

when you tell them, “We are about to tear down this flaunting flag of Protestant ascendancy,” and then tear off no more than the least corner of it? (Cheers.)

The Irish peasant had been taught that murder and outrage were necessary to stimulate the conscience of English statesmen, and his answer to such promises as this bill appeared in a handwriting, which had so often made English statesmen tremble, though it needed no Daniel to interpret it—he said he would be satisfied with no less than the possession of this land, which her Majesty’s government had no intention of giving him. (Cheers and counter-cheers.) But was the bill a politic one? How should we judge of the policy of any measure affecting Ireland? Surely it should be a healing, an alleviating, a civilizing measure? Let us apply these tests:

The noble Earl who introduced this subject last evening asked us if we ought not to deal with Ireland as we would that we should be done by; and had I had the honor to follow the noble Earl I should have ventured to ask the question, “Which Ireland do you mean?” (Cheers.) There is the Ireland of the north and the Ireland of the south. Those are two and very different Irelands; but in my judgment there are three. There is Protestant Ireland, there are the Roman Catholic peasantry of Ireland, and distinct from both—a nation within a nation, with a separate allegiance—is the Roman Catholic priesthood. You have to consider each of these three parties when you are about to carry