

Be Still, Thou Weary, Troubled Heart.

Translated from the German.

Be still, thou weary, troubled heart,
Of all life's ills complaining,
Thou hast in heav'n thy better part,
Where God, thy Father's, reigns,
He, who complains,
But more ill gains;
To God thou should'st betake thee,
He never can forsake thee.

Be still, nor woe anticipate!
What good can come of fretting?
Though thou dost lose, still patient wait,
From God, still sure of getting.
Thou art but dust,
Thy Maker trust,
For thee so long providing,
He merits thy confiding.

Be still, nor turn away to man,
What can he do to aid thee?
God has for thee his perfect plan,
Though succor's long delayed thee.
The pathway dim,
Turn still to him;
What e'er thy lot or station,
He knows thy valuation.

Be still, though who distracted be,
Great billows round thee closing,
One, walking, comes across the sea,
His voice still int'posing:
"Be not afraid,
I bring thee aid,
When, in deep water thinking
Of thee, my child, I'm sinking."

Be still. Hast thou been long in grief,
Long of thy burden wear,
Say not, "For me there's no relief,
Life is forlorn and dreary."
Hast thou not heard
His spoken word:
That word that faileth never:
He is thy help forever.

Be still, nor let thy unbelief
In conflict overthrow thee!
His arms through all the night of grief,
Canst thou not feel below thee?
Dost thou seek rest?
Here it is best,
On Him but lean thou firmer:
'Twill hush thine every murmur.

Be still! The messenger of death
Soon brings death a termination,
He comes, as in His word, He saith,
Who is thy strong salvation
There, there he stands,
With nail-scarred hands,
Thy troubles all are ending,
Thyself to God ascending.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Curious Customs of Parliament.

By T. P. O'Connor, M.P.

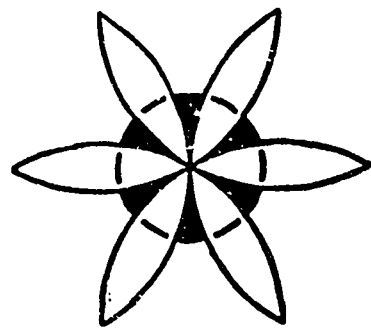
This question of seats in the House of Commons is one of the most burning of topics. Several times in the course of Parliament there have been occasions when an actual physical encounter seemed possible between the leaders of the Liberal party and of the Liberal-Unionists, and the whole dispute was a question of seats, writes T. P. O'Connor, M. P., in the *Million*. I have already given instances of very exciting and pathetic scenes which have taken place in the past all over the occupation of a particular seat. And, finally, the Irish party broke into two hostile sections over the point where the Irish members should sit in the House of Commons. There is a reason for all this. The particular spot where a member sits proclaims to all the world his political opinions, and also his personal and official position. The party in power always sits on the right hand side of the speaker; the party in opposition always occupies the left hand benches. When you read that cheers came from the right of the speaker's chair, that means they have come from the supporters of the government in power at that particular moment; and similarly if the report states that the cheers have proceeded from the ministerial benches, it means that they have proceeded from the right of the speaker's chair. If you had been for some years on a desert island, and were suddenly to be transported to the House of Commons without any previous information, you would only require to look at the benches to learn whether the Liberal or Conservative party was still in power. I have seen the same party occupy different sides of the House in

the same Parliament. In July, 1885, Mr. Gladstone was expelled from office. There was an interregnum of a few days, for nobody knew whether the Queen would except the resignation of Mr. Gladstone, and whether the Conservative leader would accept office. During this interregnum the Liberals still remained on the right hand side; but when, after the lapse of a few days, it began to be certain that the Conservative leaders were going to accept office the Liberals passed over to the left or opposition side of the House, and then everybody knew that the change of government was going to take place. There is one party, however, which has never changed its seats since its formation; that is the Irish party of which the late Mr. Parnell was the leader, and which at present is led by Justin McCarthy. In 1880 it was that the fierce conflicts broke out on this question of seats to which I have already alluded. The Liberal party has come into power; and the moderate section of the Irish members, led by Mr. Shaw, were of opinion that the wisest thing for the Irish members to do was to form an alliance with the Liberal party, and fight together. But the followers of Mr. Parnell thought that this would make a dangerous surrender of independence, might lead to the acceptance of office by Irish members, and, in that way, remove the pressure on the Liberal party which the Parnellites thought necessary to wring from Liberal government all the reforms they demanded. The Irish party is sometimes called the party of independent opposition; much of the furious fight going on in Ireland between the two sections of Nationalists depends on the point which of the two is the better entitled to this appellation. By independent opposition is meant that the Irish party remains in opposition to every government until Ireland receives back her own Parliament. It is held that this attitude should be proclaimed and emphasized by the seats which the party occupies in the House of Commons. If they always sit on the opposition side of the House, then everybody knows that they have not departed from their attitude of permanent opposition and permanent independence. So strong is the feeling on this point that it is embodied in what is known as the "pledge." Every member of the Irish party or rather of the anti-Parnellite section, before being selected as a candidate, signs a pledge the first words of which are, "I pledge myself to sit, act and vote" with the majority of the Irish parliamentary party. It will be seen that the place where the member sits is insisted upon as one of the indications of his loyalty to the majority of his party. I heard with some surprise that when Mr. Parnell was on a visit to Mr. Edward Evans, Jr., of Liverpool, immediately after his historic visit to Hawarden, he spoke of the possibility of the Irish members crossing the floor of the House and swelling the great Liberal majority which he expected to see. I fancy myself that the Irish party will continue to act in the future as it has in the past, and will sit on the opposition benches until home rule is definitely conceded or definitely denied.

My readers have often doubtless been puzzled by reading in the newspapers that cheers have proceeded from below the gangway. This word "gangway" is one of the most puzzling in parliamentary reporting. It is always turning up and it seems to indicate all kinds of things. The gangway is simply the passage that runs down on either side between the benches. Evidently it would have been too inconvenient for a member to have had to pass up the whole uninterrupted length of a bench in order to get at his seat, and therefore, for convenience sake, a break is made half way up the benches. Little did the upholsterer or architect

who made this extraordinary provision think of the magnitude of the work they had done. The institution of the gangway was one of the momentous of political events; for the gangway has served to mark the difference between section of politicians. The gangway has been the dividing line that has broken up many a party and many a ministry; and finally, the gangway is the rubicon which a Liberal member has to cross on his first entrance, thereby proclaiming to all time his choice between the moderate and extreme section of Liberal opinion. The meaning of all this is that the gangway on the Liberal, and to some extent on the Conservative side, marks the dividing line between two sets of opinion. Any man who takes his seat below the gangway on the Liberal side thereby signifies that he is a Radical. On the other hand if a member sits above a gangway he proclaims that his views are moderate. Furthermore, above the gangway men are those who take the delicate method of suggesting that they are indisposed to accept service in a paid office under the Queen if there be any desire to utilize their abilities. The tradition is as to the seats below the gangway representing radical opinion they are so stubborn that Mr. Bright, when he left office, immediately resumed his seat on the benches below the gangway. Although he had been one of the official tribe, he proclaimed his Radicalism the moment he had escaped from the official collar. Similarly in 1886, when Mr. Chamberlain left the ministry of Mr. Gladstone on the introduction of Home Rule, he took his seat on the benches below the gangway when he first entered Parliament, and undoubtedly if he left a Liberal ministry that also would be the spot where he would again seek his abiding place. On the Conservative side of the House the line is not drawn so tightly, largely because the bonds of discipline are so strict among Conservatives that they do not allow any difference of opinion which may exist among them to reach the public eye. Nevertheless, there is something of a difference between the Tories who sit above and those who sit below the gangway. The men below the gangway are of a more independent turn of mind, and do not proclaim the world that they have joined the ranks of the office holders or office seekers. Let me give an instance which the change from below to above the gangway marked an important political event in its way. It is well-known that Lord Randolph Churchill formed what was called the fourth party in 1880, when the Conservatives had sustained an overwhelming defeat at the polls. There could be no doubt that he was an independent member—he was, indeed, independent with a vengeance. For five years he led almost equally violent war on the leaders of the Liberal and on the leaders of the Tory party. He was as merciless to poor Sir Stafford Northcote as to Mr. Gladstone. One of his partners in his rash and audacious enterprise was Mr. Arthur Balfour. Mr. Arthur Balfour was not then held in anything of the high regard he has since succeeded in gaining; he played very second fiddle indeed to Lord Randolph Churchill. He was not supposed to have any of the reckless and irrepressible courage of the leader, and often these were rumors of a break between the rashness of the one and what was considered the timidity of the other. But these rumors, though often repudiated, were not realized till the third or fourth year of the enterprise. One night Mr. Balfour was missed from his place beside Lord Randolph Churchill. It is extraordinary how quick the House of Commons is to perceive a little thing like this. Shortly after, Mr. Balfour rose from the third bench above the gangway. At once there was a wild outburst of laughter. Neither the Fourth party or any of its members were taken very seriously in those days. The

break up of the small body was regarded with something of amused contempt with which one would hear of the outbreak of a mutiny in the ranks of the Prince of Monaco's armed hosts.



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