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SPEECH OF DR. COOKE, AT BELFAST.

A great Conservative Festival was held at Belfast, on Tuesday, the 20th ult. A building had been erected expressly for the occasion. J. E. Tennent, Esq., M.P., presided. The number of visitors and members who sat down to dinner was 1,158,—including many persons of distinction and influence. The following Speech was delivered by Dr. Cooke, whose name was associated in a toast with the Synod of Ulster:—

Mr Chairman, my Lords and Gentlemen, —I appear before you contrary to the opinion of some of my best friends, and I am sorry to say, contrary to some of my most sensitive feelings. (Hear.) But while the cheers of this assembly may be somewhat unfavourable to a head-ache, I feel bound to pronounce them an admirable specific for the heart-ache. (Hear, and loud cheers.) As I have never before, sir, felt it a duty to appear at the anniversaries of this society, nor indeed to attend any other such public festivals, perhaps I may be permitted, before returning the thanks that are due, to assign some reasons why I am here to return them. (Hear, hear.) First, then, I am here because I believe the Belfast Society to have been originally necessary, to have been admirably conducted, and eminently successful. (Hear, hear.) The moment the Vessel of Reform was launched, the "Natural Leaders" (natural enough) piped all hands, sprung to the helm, strutted the deck, seized every rope, and vowed the wooden walls their own. (Loud cheers.) "With your leave gentlemen," said the Belfast Society, "we have no opinion of your piloting in a narrow channel, and less of your seamanship in troubled waters"—so they clapped them under hatches to await further orders, and committed the vessel to the hearts of oak that now man her, and gave the helm to "the pilot that was known to have weathered the storm. (Hear, hear.) I am here, now sir, because I was, and am, a friend to the Belfast society. I am here, sir, because I am a member of that Society. (Loud cheers.) Yes sir, I have been from its origin, a member of this Society. We are arrived at that point where self-defence compels us to the practical enactment of the ancient law which condemned every man who stood neutral in the hour of his country's danger. (Hear, hear, and loud cheering.) But are we in danger? The answer to that question altogether depends upon what you mean by danger. Are we in danger of being affrighted? Not a whit.—"Hearts of oak are our ships." (Loud cheers.) Are we in danger of being assailed? We are assailed already—our Bibles trepanned—(hear, hear)—locked out by the extracts of the Board as effectually as they were locked in by the Vatican and cardinals—our very existence threatened by "a universal and bloody rebellion"—the asserted smallness of our numbers displayed before the "emphatic people," to encourage the heroes of Miletia and Brobdidnag to assail the Libiputian Sassenachs. (Hear, hear, and loud cheers.) The House of Lords, our protectors at once against the encroachments of the crown and the proverbial fierceness of the democracy threatened to be swept away by a dozen of serving-maids with their brooms—a threat the ridicule of which was but employed to demonstrate its fallacy, and how completely it depended on the will of the great besom man to achieve the feat should the maggot bite. (Hear.) Nay, not we ourselves—the Protestants of the North—I say, emphatically, the Protestants, including in one name all who, on Scriptural principles protest against the errors and domination of Rome. (Loud and long continued cheers.) Yes, sir, we have been threatened, not with a visit from the mop-twirlers (hear, hear,) but a host from the kingdom of Kerry, armed with kate-stocks to drive us into the sea. (Hear, hear.) Again I say, the ridiculousness of the threat was intended to mask its atrocity, and to encourage on to the deed, should the hour ever arrive for the attempt. (Hear, hear.) But while I have admitted we are in danger—not in

danger of being affrighted, not in danger of being assailed—a more important question remains to be answered—"are we in danger of being beaten?" (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Beaten? No. (Cheers.) We meditate no aggression, we inscribe no "death's-head and crossbones," we threaten no "universal and bloody rebellion," we fear God, honour the King, and we can defend ourselves. (Cheers.) I have thus ventured to appear before you, and this meeting to register my contempt for the affection of "dignified neutrality," a "hypocritical non-intervention." But I had another reason—I really came to see my friends. I came to enjoy the spirit-stirring sight of a thousand liberal Protestants assembled under one roof and united as one man.—(Cheers.) Yes, a thousand liberal Protestants. May I be permitted, sir, to assign another reason for attending this anniversary? (Hear.) Well, then, I lately read an extract from a London newspaper, the *Globe* and which I learn has been circulated, as similar truths usually are, through the whole Radical Press—that the Conservative meetings through England and Ireland (the noble, though more local assemblies of Banbridge and Ballymena inclusive) have all been marked by despondency. Yes, yes they tell us that our once gay Protestant voices are now universally set to the melancholy crooning of despondency. I am here then, to witness your despondency. Pray gentlemen, where is it? I can't see it. (Loud cheers.) Where is it? I can't hear it. (Cheers.) Oh, that the editor of the *Globe* were here, like another Atlas, with the world upon his back, that he might soothe his melancholy by the sympathy of your despondency. (Cheers.) Despondency! Conservative Despondency! Ah! I have it; I recollect a scene where there was great despondency. It was on the memorable plain of Waterloo when the scourge of nations summoned up all his energies for one last fearful struggle for existence and victory. Over the battle field of France the cloud gathered and concentrated its terrors. Forcible as the avalanche of the Alps it thunders onward, and sweeps away resistance. Resistance? Resistance there is none. Around the meteor flag of England there is nought but close-clipped silence and despondency. Not a token of hope appears. The once proud army of Britain seems as crouched in craven cowardice, while the artillery of France is playing fearfully over them. The iron columns still thunder onward; but just when France's victory seems secure, the eagle eye of Britain's commander discerns the fatal moment, and his lip vibrates with the electric word "Up guards and at them." (Deafening cheers.) From that still peaceful field starts the chivalry of England—one charge, one fearful charge of Britain's resistless bayonets, and the columns of France are scattered like the light chaff of the thrashing floor before the winds of the winter. (Cheers.) And such is our Conservative despondency! Yes, we are in a deep fit of Waterloo despondency. (Hear.) Calm, recumbent, collected, not vaunting its prowess, but hushing its resources; knowing its rights, and determined to defend them; peaceful, and therefore guilty of no aggression; brave, and determined to suffer none. (Hear.) I know sir, I know right well, what the self-deceived *Globe* mistakes for Conservative despondency; it is our clear discerning of the signs of these times, times that require no interpreter; they interpret themselves. The House of Lords to be swept out, ourselves to be driven into the sea; rebellion threatened, universal and bloody. Above all, when we see foul-mouthed faction assail the very seat of justice; and in the delegated judge, "the magic of his power," in reality, assail "the person of the King," it is surely high time to be serious, though neither time nor reason to despond. There was a time when a Lord Chief Justice committed to the common prison "the immediate heir of England," because he offered an insult to his office.—Our bench is still graced by men as immaculate in honour, and as noble in disposition as he that chastised the rebellious son of his Sovereign. (Cheers.) And should the li-

bered "insolence of office" again dare to repeat its base assaults, I trust a judge may still be found in the land, bold enough and firm enough to chastise the rude and unmannered plebeianism that would insult the virtue it can neither affright nor contaminate. (Hear.) These are signs the reading of which may not produce fear, but they must produce solemnity. I would not be a Conservative for an hour if I found that these signs were looked upon lightly. The men who deal in words of blood are always bloody, if they dared. (Hear, hear.) But "the bloody and deceitful man," the Scriptures tells us, "the Lord abhors." Therefore we call for peace and court it, while in solemn seriousness, but not in despondency, we stand prepared to offer every constitutional resistance to every threatened aggression. (Loud and long-continued cheering.) Allow me to add another reason why I am with you: I am here to assert my own liberty—(hear, hear)—my liberty of thinking and acting for myself. I care little for the opinion of the Voluntary Radicals, who chronicle every time I set foot in a steam-boat, and honour me with being the mover in events of which they knew the purpose or issue, before ever I had heard of their occurrence; but I do not regard the opinion of some who question the propriety of a clergyman taking part in politics. A partisan clergyman I heartily condemn: a clergyman with the true politics of principle I as cordially approve and defend. (Hear, hear.) Such were all the prophets, ministers of God both in Church and State. Such was Paul, an apostle to the Gentiles, the rebuker of Felix, the assessor of his political franchise, the legal appellant to Cæsar.—But while I freely admit there are some good persons who, for want of reading their Bibles, and from studying their politics not in them but in newspapers, are consequently led to condemn as an unbecoming secularism in a minister what is in reality an integral part of his spiritual office—yet I am well convinced, from observation, that the greater number of those who would prevent the clergy from ever lifting up their voices in politics do so, not because they think their silence necessary, but because they consider their speaking dangerous. They wish to clear the political arena of a troublesome antagonist, and hypocritically denounce him as a political parson, simply because he is not on their own side. The organ of the little mock parliament in the Exchange has threatened us with the withdrawal of our endowments if we are to witness for the truth; and the Radical press of the north, in its honest and dishonest branches, (for I admit the existence of two species) has re-echoed the same threat. Poor, impotent, malicious things, your "wish was father to the thought" of our spoliation. (Loud cheers.) I wonder to what use our pitiful endowment is to be appropriated? Is Maynooth to get it for teaching additional loyalty! (Hear, hear.) Is another Roman Catholic Bishop to be sent to New South Wales with a salary of £500 a year? These are questions I cannot answer, but one thing I can tell—they may rob, but they will never affright, the General Synod of Ulster. (Continued cheers.) The Synod of Ulster was originally settled in Ulster as a Protestant outpost, to civilize a rude country, and to defend and perpetuate British connection. The renowned Sir Dougal Dalgety always recommended his hospitable entertainer not to trust to the castle stone for defence, but to build a scone on Drumsab. (Hear, hear.) King James the first raised such an outpost to his castle; but he wisely erected not a temporary scone, but a permanent building; and as long as 700,000 Presbyterians are ready to man its walls, the castle is secure. The Synod of Ulster "has done the State some service." The rebels of 1641 endeavoured to detach the concentrated Ulster Scots from their more scattered fellow-Protestants vowing a most wolfish affection for them as nations of the same origin. The Presbyterians were not entrapped by these offers of conciliation; they stood by the common cause of Protestantism, and the kingdom was preserved. (Hear, hear.) In 1688, when real freedom properly dates its origin,

they were amongst the first to address King William; (loud cheers;) and when he came to Ireland to achieve four deliverance, they were amongst the first to hail him in the metropolis of the north; (hear, hear;) and when George I. came to the throne, they were amongst the first to tender their allegiance, and to acquire the glorious conjoint title of "Presbyterian and Hanoverian"—a title which their sons have never forfeited or disgraced. (Hear, hear.) And if the Synod have ever, in any degree, forgot her first principles, I am happy to say, she has returned to them. (Hear, hear.) Our surname, indeed, is Presbyterian, but our family name is Protestant. (Continued cheers.) If, in form of government, we differ from our brethren, in doctrine we are one, and in heart we are one. I speak for, and of, the Synod of Ulster; but neither I nor any other man can represent it. As in any large body, shades of difference may pervade our opinions of public measures and public acts, but in our professions and maintenance of the grand doctrines of Protestantism, and in our unshaken attachment to British connection, we have but one heart, one voice, and one hand. (Hear, hear.) On the all-engrossing subject of national education, the Synod of Ulster has also endeavoured to do her duty. I early began to suspect the motives of the Board, but the most suspicious amongst us never dreamed of its "tender mercies," and did finally more to expose its enormities, by the fact of his temporary compliance, than perhaps some others effected who opposed it from the beginning. As a specimen of its trickery, allow me to state to you a modern and neighboring fact.—(Hear, hear.) A grant of public money was made to a priest; he built the school-house in the yard of the mass-house. (Hear, hear.) This act being duly reported to the Board they refused the grant until the premises were separated. So that between the school house and the chapel there is erected a lofty wall, just—three feet high; Protestantism is thus protected. The Board is satisfied with this impassable partition—and the money is granted without further question. I have heard of it being said to a member of the Church of England—"there is nothing between your Church and the Church of Rome but a paper wall." "Yes," repeated the other, "there is indeed but a paper wall between them—but, thank God, the whole Bible is fairly written on it." (Cheers.) "Ah! ah!" says the Protestant watchman of the Board, "your school for combined education is too near the mass-house."—"I'll soon alter that matter," says the priest "So he raises, not a paper wall, with the whole Bible on it, but he raises a stone wall, three feet high, with the Bible, in principle buried under it. (Loud Cheers.) I trust I may be also permitted to say, that whilst the Synod of Ulster stands firmly by her own platform of doctrine, government and discipline, she is not wrapped up selfishly in her own mantle, but willing and anxious to share her covering with every faithful sister. (Cheers.) The Protestant churches of all lands, who hold by the head even Christ, while they, perhaps, testify to, or in some things, against one another, are bound by christian principle, to cultivate forbearance, brotherly kindness, and charity.—(Cheers.) But in this country and in these days we are under a new obligation. We are bound by mutual common danger.—(Hear, hear.) Look at the melancholy case of Mr Hogg. This man and his family neither sought nor received the obnoxious and denounced tithes. He is a mere curate. Yet his house is fired; and when he escapes from his assassins, the water raised by the bullets shot after him, flashes around as he escapes to the distant side of the river for help or protection. The deed is notorious; and, if I have been rightly informed, not our noble Viceroy—for he could not lend himself to an act so unworthy of his rank, or practice upon Protestants such a studied insult—not he, but some underling of his court, publishes a reward of £50 for information against the perpetrators of a Protestant family murder! munificent remunera-