

## ENGLAND,

IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.  
THE IRISH DEBATE.

After a discussion of nine nights, the debate on the condition of Ireland terminated at four o'clock on the morning of Saturday week. The majority in favour of the Ministers was 90, in a house of 549. The discussion, although protracted, and occasionally wearisome, elicited upon the whole more than the average talent of similar parliamentary conflicts. There were some brilliant speeches on both sides—efforts that will live in history. On the ministerial side, the best speeches were those delivered by Sir James Graham, Lord Stanley, the Solicitor General, the Irish Attorney-General, and Sir Robert Peel; on the opposition side, by Lord John Russell, Mr. Macaulay, Sir Thomas Wilde, Mr. Sheil, Mr. O'Connell, and Mr. Roebuck. The discussion may be said to have embraced three phases—the past history of Ireland; the events arising out of the late trial, and the mode of conducting it; and the future policy for the amelioration of that country.

## STATE OF IRELAND.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.—February 13.

This debate, one of unprecedented length in Parliamentary annals, was opened in a very full House by

Lord JOHN RUSSELL, who moved for a committee of the whole House to take into consideration the state of Ireland. He attacked the method of governing Ireland pursued by the present Government. "Ireland," he said, "is occupied, and not governed, by those who now hold the reins of power (Hear, hear.) I say, and say it deliberately, Ireland is occupied, and not governed by the present administration. (Hear, hear.) The Government of this free country has been and should be a Government of opinion; the present Government in Ireland is notoriously a Government of force." (Hear, hear.)

Ever since the period of the Union, the Irish people had been made to wait for the fulfilment of promises made to them by Mr. Pitt, and those promises were not yet fulfilled. Up to a very recent period Roman Catholics had been systematically excluded from all juries. She had never enjoyed a franchise like England—

"I may be told," said his lordship, "that in considering the state of Ireland, we ought not to look to those questions of political franchise and political rights; that these will not put bread into the mouths of the hungry, or give employment to the unemployed; that these are not the remedies which Ireland requires in her distressed condition. I do not concur in such notions of the matter. (Hear, hear.) I have been accustomed to think that the participation of equal rights, that the benefits of a free constitution, are the very first and very best means by which we can impart prosperity to a country." (Hear, hear.)

These views were remarkably confirmed by the opinions delivered both by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox in 1792.—

"And let me not be told," his lordship continued, "that we are now to learn some more speculative and abstract wisdom; let us not be told that Government can find means to give employment to a people without giving that people the benefit of the constitution—(Hear, hear)—that they can withhold the franchise, and yet confer prosperity; it is not in their power to do so. (Hear, hear.) I tell them that with respect to Ireland—happily it is unnecessary to say with respect to England—the best they can do with the people of that country—no doubt they may do other

things, and adopt measures highly necessary—but the best thing they can do for Ireland is to secure every man there in the enjoyment of his clear rights, and enable every man to be sure that he will be represented according to the principles of the constitution." (Cheers.)

One of the best speeches is that of Lord Howick. His principal argument is, the weakness of the Empire occasioned by the discontent of Ireland, of which the following is an extract:

"Do you believe that three centuries of wrong after wrong, and waging battle after battle, for the maintenance of the establishment, at the sacrifice of the feelings of the people of Ireland can be readily forgotten? (Cheers.) Do you believe that three centuries of injustice and wrong have passed away, and not produced their necessary effects on the minds of the Irish people? (Loud cheers.) Let us judge of the Irish people by ourselves. Just ask, the people of England how they would feel if they were placed in the situation of the people of Ireland with reference to the Church Establishment? Just suppose for the moment that Ireland were the larger country, and had conquered England, and that a united Parliament sat in Dublin, and that we went before that Parliament, and applied for the restoration of a large endowment which had been taken from a Protestant Establishment, and transferred to the Catholic Church; suppose that such an appeal were made and resisted by such arguments as those brought forward by the right honorable gentleman opposite, would we, from any such mode of reasoning as we have heard, be induced to consent to a Catholic Established Church among us? (Hear, hear.)—Would the Right Honorable Baronet himself consent to it? (Cheers.) Can he lay his hand on his heart and say, that he would be less than a Repealer? and I am not mistaken if, under such a state of things, he would not follow the example of the people of Scotland, and take to the mountains and trust to his claymore. (Hear.) I can only say for myself that I would not submit to such a galling and degrading yoke (Loud cheers.) I would endeavour to obtain justice by every peaceful means, but no sacrifice that I could make would I consider, be too great to get rid of a yoke so very galling and degrading. (Loud cheers.)

## O'CONNELL'S PROTESTATION.

Mr. O'Connell rose, and the House (which had been rather noisy during Mr. Shaw's explanation) immediately became deadly silent. He said: Sir, I hope that there is not an individual in this house who will suppose I have risen to say anything about myself, or that there is an individual in this house, who after I have said what I intend to say, will have discovered—had he not known it by other means—that I had any personal interest in the late trials. Sir, I rise for another purpose: I am here to make a protestation. I am here to ask a question. I am here to protest in the name of my country, and on behalf of my countrymen, against the commission of one additional injustice to Ireland; and I am here also to ask the simple question of how is Ireland to be governed? (Loud cheers from the opposition.) I don't ask who is to govern it. I may have my preference on that point—probably I have—(laughter and cheers from the opposition)—But I ask how is it to be governed? Sir, there is one fact which no man can deny, and that is—that there is no one country in the world which ever inflicted so much oppression, which committed so many crimes against another, as England has committed against Ireland. That, sir, is an undeniable truth. The House was responsible for what had happened since the Union. You ought to think of the situation of Ireland at the Union, and compare it with its present state. If Ireland was then in a condition of distress and destitution, and if it has since arisen to prosperity and comfort, then applaud your government, talk of your wisdom as statesmen, and refer to the act of transition from want and misery to plenty and comfort

as decisive evidence of the wisdom of your councils. But is it so? Is that the state in which the facts are before the world? No, sir, directly the reverse is the fact. At the period of the Union there was conspicuous prosperity in Ireland. For eighteen years before that time it had enjoyed the highest of self-government, and it is a portion of history that no country ever rose so fast in prosperity as Ireland during those eighteen years. (Hear) In 1810, Mr. Pitt admitted, of course—he admitted, even against his own interest—that Ireland was in a state of prosperity, and the same thing was declared by the other side by one of the most powerful statesmen in Ireland—Lord Clare. Both concurred in the material point; but not content with letting well alone, not content with allowing that prosperity to go on progressing, they thought they could accelerate the progress by joining Ireland with England. Has the prophecy been fulfilled? Is Ireland in a state of prosperity? I am not here to talk of claims for political, and what, in some cases, may be fanciful rights. I am not speaking of the franchise—or of corporate rights—or of municipal rights—or of Parliamentary rights, but I am speaking of material and actual prosperity. Sir, what is the condition of Ireland? You talk of demagogues having power there. Oh! see the materials of their power,—(loud cheers from the Opposition)—the poverty and distress of the country! Kuhl, the German traveller, has no sympathies with the Repealers; on the contrary, he showed a distrust towards them.—That man, in his book on Ireland, has declared and pointed out, although he has travelled through all the countries of Europe—in none of them did he find distress such as he found in Ireland. There was no such thing known in other countries, and this, forty-four years after the Union! But there is Wiggins, agent to Lord Healdy, in 1830, he quoted instances of incipient prosperity. Fifteen years after his prophecy he has published a book; and, being a man familiar with Ireland, and with the condition of the people, he has declared that poverty has increased—is increasing—that everything is growing worse—that the sufferings of the people are hardly pronounceable. These are the materials on which a popular man of Ireland grows powerful.—(Loud cheers.) It appears from the commissioners (of Poor Laws) report that in the agricultural population seventy per cent. are in a state of poverty, living in a cabin containing only one room, while of the town population thirty per cent. lived in one room; and there were often several families living in the same. That according to the basis of the increase between 1821 and 1831, there should have been an addition to the population of seven hundred thousand, whereas there was but 70,000. Can any man who hears me deny these facts?—(Cheers.) Has any man who hears me ever seriously weighed them? I have shown that Ireland was prosperous before the Union. I have given you a faithful picture of her at present. Now how do you mean to govern Ireland? (Loud cheers) You can, to be sure, take legal proceedings against some of her people. You have sent an army over; but will that remedy the evils under which she is suffering—will it mitigate them? will it ease the deplorable poverty in which the mass of the population is sunk? (Loud cheers) With all my delinquencies on my head, the generous sympathy I have met in this country I shall never forget or conceal. (Vehement cheering from the opposition.) I shall proclaim it from one end of Ireland to the other. This, then is your time. Rally now for the elevation of the Irish people. (Loud cheers) Had the Union been real, the franchise should have been the same—all corporate rights the same—every civic privilege identical. Cork should have no more difference from Kent than York from Lancashire. That ought to have been the Union. (Cheers) That was Mr. Pitt's object. He distinctly obtained the sanction of the Sovereign to the measure on the ground of identifying the two people, which could not be done if a dominant religion was to be maintained. Emancipation was, therefore part of the terms of the union. The moment it was carried some ill-advisers of the crown—some exceedingly conscientious men—(Hear, hear, and laughter)—who deemed their own religion the sole depository of religious truth, induced the king to withdraw his consent. That was the time to have settled things according to your own wishes, but unhappily "the church in danger" was the cry raised. The union took place—an identification which was no other than that which Lord Byron speaks of as the shark identified with his prey for the

purpose of swallowing it. (Loud cheers.)—And what was the first act of your imperial legislation?—An act for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, and abolishing trial by jury. In 1805, Mr. Pitt was a party to the rejection of the Catholic petition. He lost his honor, but he reserved his place. Immediately after his death the Whigs came into office, and carried one great measure. They abolished the slave trade in the West Indies. They were able to do nothing for Ireland. Even the power given to the king to raise officers in the army and navy, conferred nothing on the Catholics. And here, Sir, I cannot help putting it to the gallant officer on the other side (Sir H. Hardinge,) how he should have felt if, for the bravery which he displayed on the part of his country, and the personal sacrifices which he cheerfully made, he had no hope of reward because his religion happened to be different from that of his commander-in-chief? Never forget that there was us gallant spirits in that army, whose chivalrous courage must have been depressed because they were conscious they could never have reaped the reward of their valor on account of their religion. (Renewed cheers) You have at last outgrown the no-Popery cry. Are you very sure that your church cry is more likely to stand the test of time? (Cheers.) Bonaparte rose, you began to conciliate; he fell, and you returned to your oppression, although the Catholic priests had been the instruments of keeping Ireland out of the hands of France. (Hear.) They, too, had their monster meetings—provincial meetings—simultaneous meetings—aggregate meetings. You attempted a prosecution; you failed. You avenged yourselves by a coercion bill. Let me take you to 1825. All the leading agitators—the bishops, the most influential men amongst the Catholic body, begged their rights as for alms on their knees. Did you want securities you might have had such that you could not get now, any more than you can get those names to flow backward. You "thanked God you had a House of Lords," and you drove the Irish people to that motto which has worked for them so much good:—

"Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not,  
Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow!"

(Cheers.) The people were roused. You attempted to return a Government candidate for Clare: I was chosen by a majority of 1,900. (Loud Cheers) Emancipation necessarily followed. You granted it in an indignant way. (Loud cheers) what you refused to justice, you yielded to necessity. Not a symptom of exultation was shown by the men who gained that victory. (Cheers.) As I said often, your union was not a compact, but the terms of capitulation granted to superior powers. It was enacted by 175,000 boroughs, and at an expense of £4,270,000. But even on your own calculation we should have 150 members; but when you granted emancipation you sacrificed the votes of the poorer classes. I did not consent to the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders, but your injustice would not be less for my participation. What next have we to complain of? the Church, which is the scapegoat of every iniquity. (Loud cheers.) The right honorable Recorder would die for it, and the wise plan he takes for preserving it is to make every restriction, every interference with the franchise and corporate reform, its buttress. (Much cheering.) What, at the present moment is your objection to deny perfect justice, but the Established Church? (Renewed cheers.) Lord Stanley though, in opposition carried a bill to limit the franchise. I thought at then right to bring on the Repeal question. Five hundred odd voted against it; but we had a pledge, with all the sanctions of an act of Parliament, that Irish grievances should be redressed. (Loud cheers.) We lay by for four years, and then formed the Precursor society, from which I presented a petition. (Here the honorable and learned member read the petition, which we are compelled to defer.) We were scouted out of this house; and he knows little of Ireland, he knows little of the feelings of an Irishman, who thinks he can possibly feel other than degraded if he could have acquiesced in silence in the perpetration of that atrocity which was then committed against him, by the sanctioning after forty years' existence of the Union, every one of the evils complained of. I confess, at the same time, if I had not a strong case of physical suffering, if our petitions were not backed by the misery, poverty, and destitution of the people of Ireland, we might have been laughed safely to scorn. But when you offered them no remedy, was it not their duty to