





PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE.

Dublin, April 11, 1850. I send you, what I am sure will be read with extreme interest, an account of the proceedings in the Society of the Friends of Ireland, who met yesterday, in Stephen-street. The valuable petition agreed to by them on the assimilation of duties is from the pen of Mr M-Mullen, a gentleman who has been most active and strenuous in his exertions to obtain for Ireland a repeal of the Stamp Duties.

The meeting of the Friends of Ireland took place in the Parliamentary Office, Stephen-street.

James Casserly, Esq., barrister at law, was called to the chair, amid the loud applause of the meeting.

On the motion of Mr Redmond, Mr Andrew Carton was admitted a member of the Society.

Mr O'Connell proposed that Christopher Anteeil, Esq., a gentleman of the bar, should be admitted a member of the Society. Mr Anteeil was one of the most independent gentlemen that could belong to any profession—he was a gentleman who had never submitted his high-minded and honourable principles to the control of any power, except the dictates of his conscientious convictions. Hear, and cheer, Mr Anteeil had ever been the friend of truth and justice, and would not now be the leader of his circuit at the bar, but would have been exalted to the bench, had he adopted a line of politics different from that which he thought was the right one.

Hear. He never felt greater pleasure in his life than in proposing the Christopher Anteeil, Esq., the best of the Honour bar, should be admitted a member of the Society. Hear, and cheer.

Mr Lawless, in a eulogical notice of Mr O'Connell, regretted that Mr Anteeil was not an Orangeman. Laughter. He hoped, however, that it would not be long before they should have some honest Orangemen amongst them. Hear, hear. He had, he could tell them, got some promises, and they should soon have the assistance of men of great talents & hear.

Mr O'Connell observed, that there was no Protestant more devoted to civil and religious liberty than Mr Anteeil.

The motion for Mr Anteeil's admission was then put to the chair, and carried unanimously.

Mr O'Connell proposed that his excellent friend Thomas Cloney, should be admitted a member of the Society. He was not ashamed or afraid to avow that Mr Cloney had in his day been a Rival General, and he, upon the defeat of the insurrectionary force in Wexford, had been made a prisoner and tried by court martial. It was there proved that his first and best thought went to the performance of what he then considered was his duty, viz. exerting the influence he possessed in the cause of humanity. He saved more lives and acted with greater humanity than any man of any party for the last century. At Mr Cloney's court martial 53 Protectors of Orangemen came forward as witnesses—the court martial became fatigued, they said that the case of humanity had been sufficiently made out.—Upwards of two hundred persons then rose in the court house and exclaimed, "You must hear us—we have saved our lives." This was a singular feat of humanity, but the court martial, though they found Mr Cloney guilty, unanimously recommended that he should obtain a free pardon. The recommendation was attended to, and Mr Cloney obtained his freedom. But when the Union was to be carried, Mr Cloney was, in gratify the gentry who wished to carry it, put into gaol, and confined there, though there was no charge against him. It was through the active humanity of Lord Clifton that Mr Cloney was at length permitted to live in peace, and in comfort and respectability. Mr O'Connell then stated that Mr Cloney had prepared for the press a most valuable and interesting account of the rebellion in Wexford. He moved that his worthy and humane friend, Mr Cloney, should be admitted a member of the Society.

Mr Redmond seconded the resolution, which passed unanimously.

Mr O'Connell next rose and said—Our object in this Society is to be practically useful. Our first object is to conciliate all sects and parties in Ireland—that I think can be best done through the means of an address to the people at large, when we should call upon in the name of Christianity to abandon their tenets and put an end to their animosities. Hear. I hope to be able by the next day of meeting, to present the draft of an address upon this subject. Hear. With reference to this topic, it gives me infinite pleasure to be able to state that all sects and parties are beginning to unite with each other; a real and substantial change has taken place in Ireland—Hear. I attended the anti-slavery meeting a few nights ago, and there met clergy men of all persuasions—men, who had been Orangemen and Bismarckers—men, who were most opposed to me, and who perhaps imputed malignity to me, as I unthinkingly did to them. I there met them as friends, and with the affections of brothers; the kindness they manifested towards us, when I have thought of it since, has more than once brought tears to my eyes. Hear and cheer.—I met there, the Rev. Mr McGee, to whom I had been so often directly opposed, and him I met with similar feelings. There was no talk between us meeting and our reconciliation: it was not the every day courtesy and mere formal good nature of society that was displayed.—No! it was from the heart, and I only accept of that which they had the kindest heart to offer me. Hear, hear. The Quaker, the Protestant, the Presbyterian, and the Catholic—men of every class were assembled together to form a most glorious object, the liberation of the black slave, no matter to what country he was being sent. A resolution of Irishmen was formed, and it is to me most gratifying to think that where all classes of Irishmen first banded together, and met on terms of equality, the meeting was not held for the benefit of Ireland, but to extend freedom and happiness to the whole of every caste and clime. Cheers. I have lately received from different parts of the country various communications in which the

writers state that they should soon have a country, because they began to hope to have one. It is a good presage and has been repeated to me more than once. Ireland has hitherto been divided; she has gained no advantage by that division; let Ireland combine her nine millions of inhabitants, and they would be too strong for oppression; the country would not be trampled upon; I will not say with impunity, but there would not be a possibility of the people continuing from the moment, that the pressure would determine to have an honest and just government in the country. I have been extremely amused with a symptom of a different description, which have been manifested by those who are getting angry in proportion as they had that men of all parties were becoming good humoured and good tempered. Those men say that our intentions are "diabolical." It is indeed exceedingly diabolical that Christians should unite in peace, harmony, and concord with each other. It is very diabolical that we should endeavour to relieve ourselves from the pressure of taxation—it is monstrously diabolical that we should endeavour to relieve the distresses of the country—it is extravagantly diabolical that we should endeavour to increase the manufactures and commerce of the country—it is shockingly diabolical that we should struggle to bring back the absentees to spend their rent in Ireland—all this, in truth, exceedingly "diabolical" to those to whom it is *deceitful* but that Irishmen should combine with each other. Cheers. If I were disposed to be a bad temper I would say that such a sentiment could only come from a diabolical *Mail*. *Mail* is now over us, but there is a black and long Lent coming for us. Laughter.—The time has now come when religion is an affair between man and his God, and not between man and man, and there is now no reason why one Christian should have another on account of his religion—bear. There is nothing low but practical measures for the good of Ireland, to occupy our attention. I have thought it my first duty this day to lay before you the draft of a petition upon the assimilation of duties. This has been one of the consequences of this Society, that practical men, who never before took part in petitions, are now coming forward to give their most valuable assistance in the details of every measure. I think the Union so much that I never read it over till this morning, and I find that the present attempt at assimilating the duties is in direct contravention of the eighth article of the Union. Hear. In 1817, there was no objection made to the assimilation of duties; and when I came to read this petition, I believe there is not a man in Ireland who will not rise up in execration against the men who carried that measure, and still more strongly against them who did not oppose it. I mean to propose that this petition be referred to the committee, and it is my wish that it should obtain as much publicity as possible. Hear. I rejoice to say that Ireland was never so well off with respect to the press as it is at present. We have in Dublin four journals. We have the *Morning Register*—we have the *Morning Post*, which is a distinct supporter of the people—we have the *Evening Post*, which has got into excellent and patriotic hands—and we have the *Pilot*, than which there cannot be a more honest and able paper in any country. Hear, hear. Indeed we have not of late had much countenance from the *Evening Post*, but I should imagine it will be with us before long, as there will not be a hearing given in proclamations to the newspapers. The *Evening Post* has made property, and accumulated wealth in the service of the people, whose interests it for many years honestly advocated. I tell the *Evening Post* that the Beresfords and Malonys never can compensate us for the loss of the people. I throw this out as advice to this paper, which for many years was the only one we had in this country, which now swarms with honest and independent newspapers. Hear and cheer. Henceforward we will have no distinctions among us—but, who is friendly to Ireland, and who are enemies to the country. With me the liberal men shall be, who is most *champion* to the poor; and the word "liberal," I shall never recognize in any other sense. Hear, hear. The petition I am now about to read, is not my own composition. I wish it was—there is not a word in it, which I do not most cordially and heartily respond to. Mr O'Connell then read the following petition:

MEMORIAL TO PARLIAMENT AGAINST THE ASSIMILATION OF THE TAXES IN IRELAND TO THOSE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of the undersigned Merchants, Manufacturers, Traders, Householders, and other Inhabitants of the City of Dublin, and of places adjoining.

Sheweth, That petitioners observe with astonishment and apprehension, that an intention is avowed by His Majesty's Government, which has been already in various instances sanctioned by Parliament, to assimilate the duties levied in Ireland, shall be assimilated to those levied in Great Britain; and that it is proposed, in the present Session of Parliament, to carry this measure into effect, in regard to the Stamp Duties.

That it is the reproach of Great Britain, and the history of the past, as well as the experience of the present times, to establish the fact, that Ireland has, for centuries, been governed upon principles totally opposed to her condition, and at variance not only with justice but with common sense.

That as far as the experience of your petitioners, or their knowledge of the history of Ireland extends, they know of no instance, in which the truth has been more clearly demonstrated, than in the present revenue and impost attempt to raise the rate of taxation in Ireland to a level with that of Great Britain.

That it is universally admitted, that England is enabled to support her enormous taxation, so largely in consequence of her extensive foreign trade.

Petitioners submit to your Honourable House that Ireland has, comparatively, no foreign trade. It appears, by reference to the public accounts, that while the exports from Great Britain to foreign countries, have, by the official returns of a hundred years, been the last two years, to about six millions sterling, the exports from Ireland, to foreign countries, are not amount to one million. It is, doubtless true, that the international trade of the two countries, the only export trade which Ireland may be said to possess, is the trade in linen; but petitioners submit, that this trade is not so extensive as that of Great Britain, and that the linen exports to Great Britain, from Great Britain, are not so extensive as those to Great Britain, and that a great number of the industry, and proprietors of the soil of Ireland, reside constantly in England; and that a large proportion of the produce of Ireland is exported to England, without Ireland receiving for it, any return whatever.

If, in point, therefore, of international trade, the balance of advantage be on the side of Great Britain, while, in point of population, Ireland is substantially less than Great Britain, it is manifestly unjust, that Ireland should, at the present time, in the infancy of her commerce, her manufactures, and her agriculture, be required to support burdens, which in the maturity of commercial, agricultural, and manufacturing prosperity, are sustained by Great Britain with difficulty, and with manifest evidence of suffering and exhaustion.

Petitioners submit that not only in respect to the contemplated assimilation of the taxes, but also in regard to her general financial condition, Ireland has been most unjustly and indelicately deprived of the advantages and immunities which by the treaty of Union were solemnly secured to her.

To demonstrate the truth of this position, it is only necessary for your petitioners to refer to the treaty itself, and to the events of the interval which have since elapsed.

By the seventh article of this most important international convention, it is, amongst other things, specially enacted, "That of the space of twenty years after the Union, the contribution of Great Britain and Ireland, respectively, towards the expenditure of the United Kingdom, shall be defrayed in the proportion of fifteen parts for Great Britain, and two parts for Ireland; and that, at the expiration of the said twenty years, their future expenditure, other than the interest and charges of the separate debt of each country, shall be defrayed in such proportion as the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall deem just and reasonable, on a comparison of the real value of the imports and exports of the two countries; or upon a comparison of the value of their respective spirits, sugar, wine, tobacco, and malt consumed in each country, or of a comparison of the amount of income in each country; and that the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall afterwards proceed to revise and fix the said proportions, according to the same rules, or any of them, or partly, not more than once in every seven years, not less than seven years from each other."

An inquiry into the manner in which the general rule of revision, here laid down, has been carried into effect, will afford to your Honourable House, an important and striking example of the species of faith, with which the treaty of Union has been administered to your benefit.

Of the long era, during which the Union was administered to continue, there could be no term, in the progress of which revision would, necessarily, be necessary, or might, with propriety, be so repeatedly called upon for, as in the present case, where the revision is forced for about 17 years, during which no revision whatever has taken place, and Ireland was wholly unable to raise, by the ordinary modes of taxation, an amount sufficient to discharge the interest of the debt, which was borrowed, and the separate debt of Ireland was, by the amount of the interest, increased, as your petitioners have been informed, to about one hundred and forty millions. The whole separate revenue of Ireland was insufficient to pay even the interest of this debt. Ireland was declared bankrupt; the exchequer and the revenues of the two countries were consolidated, and the revenues of Ireland were applied to the discharge of the debt of Great Britain, which has since been extensively carried into effect, was first put in progress.

Petitioners intrude upon your Honourable House to consider how far this was consistent with the treaty of Union.

The treaty certainly did provide for the consolidation of the exchequer of the two countries, and for a general assimilation of the taxes, and it pointed out, very distinctly, the circumstances under which this should take effect.

It was, by the seventh article of the treaty, further enacted, "That if, at any future day, the separate debt of each country, or respectively, should be liquidated;—or if the value of their respective debts should be equal in the same proportion with the respective contributions of each country, respectively; or, if the amount by which the larger of such debts shall exceed such proportion, shall not exceed one fourth part of the value of the debt, which shall appear to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, at the circumstances of the two countries, it shall be competent to Parliament to declare that all future expenses shall be defrayed by equal taxes, and that the said debt of each country, or respectively, shall be liquidated;—or if the value of their respective debts should be equal in the same proportion with the respective contributions of each country, respectively; or, if the amount by which the larger of such debts shall exceed such proportion, shall not exceed one fourth part of the value of the debt, which shall appear to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, at the circumstances of the two countries, it shall be competent to Parliament to declare that all future expenses shall be defrayed by equal taxes, and that the said debt of each country, or respectively, shall be liquidated;—or if the value of their respective debts should be equal in the same proportion with the respective contributions of each country, respectively; 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