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LETTERS

TO THE

RIGHT HON. WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE.

ON THE

IRISH LAND BILL

AND THE

STATE OF IRELAND FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS.

BY

HENRY MERVYN D'ARCY IRVINE,

CASTLE IRVINE, IRVINESTOWN, COUNTY
FERMANAGH, IRELAND,

M.A., Queen's Scholar and Moderator T.C.D., a Superseded Justice
of the Peace—a Rejected Candidate for the Office of High
Sheriff of the County Fermanagh by the Government
for twenty years—a Resident Irish Landlord—
Owner and Occupier of the Lake Erne Hotel
—Owner and Occupier of the Irvinestown
Flour, Oatmeal, Indian Meal, and
Saw Mills, and of the Irvines-
town Brick Works and Tilery.

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Houses of the Oireachtas

IRISH LAND BILL.

LETTER TO THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

Castle Irvine,
Irvinestown, April 20th, 1870.

SIR,

In reply to yours of the 1st, I have to state that since my experience of the government of Ireland by British rule there have been many painful subjects connected with it. My experience commenced with the potato famine, through all the horrors of which I went, and bore my part in trying to alleviate it. It was painful to me to see, notwithstanding the great assistance given by the British public, and their sympathy with us in our affliction, that the Government, through red-tapeism and ignorance, almost made null and void the voluntary assistance given. It was painful for me to be refused meal at £20 per ton out of the Government stores, and told to buy it in the market, when it could be hardly procured at any money. It was painful for me to be refused money afterwards to buy meal at £10 in the market, and to be given the meal refused before and charged £20 for it. It was painful to me to hear of quantities of meal and corn thrown out afterwards as useless for either human food or pig feeding. It was painful to me to see our estates sold for a song in the Encumbered Estates Court, the same title which was refused to the owner being given to the purchaser. It was painful to me to see the tenants on those estates in most instances either evicted or their rents raised. It was painful to me to see the operation of the Poor Laws. By the system, of electoral division rating, the poor were ejected from the rural districts, where, as agricultural laborers, their assistance was required, into towns where their assistance was not required, and where they lived wretchedly, huddled into hovels like vermin. It was painful for

me to see the laborers of Ireland, who went to England to seek labor at a remuneration barely fit to support them, making the fortune of cotton and other trade lords, when worn out by sickness and labor, returned to their own country, shipped more carelessly than the English of the present day would allow with cattle. It was painful for me to see Lord George Bentinck's plan for employing the poor of Ireland frustrated through jealousy, and our laboring population in consequence obliged to emigrate, leaving the most important work in Ireland, namely, our arterial drainage, either uncommenced or, where commenced, only to be spoiled by a Government Board of Works—a board which has done more positive and negative injury to Ireland than any infliction which Providence has pleased to inflict upon us. It was, and is, painful to me to see all rank, position, order, and obedience to the government of the country systematically levelled down to almost the lowest ebb. As Bishop Moriarty published, all honors, places and emoluments were given, not as a reward for merit and distinguished services, but as a bribe to make those in outward appearance loyal who were in their hearts disloyal. It was painful to me to see the disestablishment of the Irish Established Church, instead of being carefully reformed with due and proper time and caution, and with the views and habits of a statesman, and with the concurrence of moderate and wise men, men of all parties, as might have been done, after due time and consideration, made a party question of, and suddenly, ruthlessly and barbarously levelled down altogether for two purposes—first, to make a premier and a party; secondly, to secure, as a support to that party, an Ultramontane faction which, all over Europe, is being obstinately and successfully opposed by all those who value the rights and privileges of civil and religious liberty.

It is under the impressions made upon me by the result of the above mentioned legislation that I come to look at the Irish Bill—conjecturing the results not of all from one, but of one from all. I find it, when first introduced, a compromise between what was promised by agitators and the spokesmen of the party I have alluded to, and what the British public might be prevailed on to sanction. I find that to the same Ultramontane party is thrown the bribe that, as they claim the conscience of their flocks in the matters of election of members of parliament, as shown in all the elections of Ireland, and, last, as fully declared at the Longford election, that, freed from all control of landlord influence, their

flocks may be at their disposal, both body and soul.

The notice to my tenants which I served on them, and the notices to quit which I have since served, require this explanation, that if, as a landlord, I am discontented with the Bill, so are the large majority of the independent solvent tenantry of Ireland—of that I was fully aware when serving these notices. The Bill is a bill meant to conciliate murderers, the disloyal and the disaffected, and, being passed as such, throws all the tenantry of Ireland into the same scale. It prevents the right of contract, which all intelligent men, both landlord and tenant, are quite competent to make, and which, in most cases, as most cases vary, could only be made by the parties interested. It makes the relation between landlord and tenant consist, instead of goodwill, friendship and interest, in one of bickering in petty courts of law, and by its omissions leaves no registry for improvements; nor does it make any provision for what is the greatest cause of trouble between landlord and tenant—namely, a provision that every letting of land, no matter how small the quantity, should be in writing, and registered with the clerk of the union. The Bill looks upon all landlords as bad, and all tenants as good. A short time since I was accosted in the town of Enniskillen by a person, who said—“Sir, we are going at last to get rid of all the bad landlords.” My reply was—“I am delighted to hear it, and hope the bad tenants will be sent after them.” No person has at present less reason to complain of his tenants than I have, but it was not always so. My estate was, in my memory, altogether under leases for three lives or 31 years. The holders of those leases kept no covenants unless in few instances, and the worst part of my estate is where those old leases exist, some of them with lives in being upwards of one hundred. In applying once to a leaseholder to keep his covenant, on his refusing, I stated I would go to law; his reply was, “Tear away, I will find some loop-hole to creep out of.” Under the land act proposed there will be many loop-holes tried to be availed of, both in the law and equity of the assistant barristers’ courts.

In writing this I neither wish nor intend to impede or prevent any law being passed which would form proper relations between good landlords and good tenants; but on the part of both—and I know I have the respectable tenants with me in this—I object to good landlords and good tenants being mixed up with bad landlords and bad tenants, and, being left no loophole to creep out of, to enter

the old and simple plan of civil contract. One part of the land question seems to have escaped the notice of the framers of the Bill and the British public—namely, the feudal relation that exists in Ireland between landlord and tenant, particularly in Ulster. The larger portion of my tenantry settled with my own family; and in my case, and all similar cases, I am aware, from remarks of tenants on the Bill since it was proposed, that any breach of the old feudal relations would be very distasteful to them, as breaking up the strong family bond of connection which at present is desirable for both landlord and tenant, and in days that may come might be, as it was intended to be, useful to the State.

Without being egotistical—as my estate has gained some notoriety from the circumstance of its being—although situated in Ulster, and without any tenant-right—a thriving and prosperous estate, I add how it comes to be so.—After trying the English experiment of doing all improvements, and having failed, I adopted both the Irish and English plan combined—I promised leases of 31 years. I gave foreign timber and slates for the houses, tiles for draining, and charged a moderate rent. On this plan I have succeeded; and I am certain I could let all Ireland on the same terms to a prosperous, contented, and solvent tenantry, and it would be the plan most suitable to the tastes of the Irish.

I come now to the landlord's part, but briefly. Under the present Bill it would be difficult to sell or borrow money, no arrangement being made which could satisfy the creditor or the purchaser, as to the many claims, defined and undefined, which the act creates, but which I hope will be remedied before the Act receives the royal assent, otherwise the Act would be worse in its consequences to many of the landlords of Ireland, and more particularly to those who have invested money in the improvement of their properties, and charged their estates for it, than was the Incumbered Estates Court to our fathers.

Since writing the above, I have learned two effects which the proposed Irish Land Bill is likely to have upon Ireland. Before the introduction of the Land Bill I was negotiating a loan in London to lower the rate of interest of the charges on my property. After its introduction I received from my Dublin correspondent a letter stating—"The Land Bill I find, is likely to prevent money from being invested here, and my experience is equal to that of most men." I next received from the London

correspondent—"In fact I consider this loan with the Land Bill the same thing as passed in all its deformity one for $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. instead of 4 per cent." The second result, I have received in the shape of a threatening notice:—

(RUDE DRAWING OF A COFFIN.)

"SUR,—Take notice in time and don't attempt to carry out your evickshon processes for if you do behold your doom the coffin is reddy for you the gun loaded and the man picked out that is to do the job. We give you fair warnin, so stop in time before it is too late or if you doant we will send you to your master the devil this (a figure of a rifle) and this (a figure of a man) will send you to your long home.

"ONE OF THE 20000

"NOT RORY OF THE HILLS."

This notice, I am quite and positively certain, does not come from any person in the locality, but from that body which has been allowed to exist so long in Ireland—which issues its sentences for the murder of any landlord who acts contrary to its laws, which are like those of the Medes and Persians, and which laws, generally made by strangers to the locality, are always given to strangers to the locality to execute.

I believe that these results are only the beginning of the end to me and others.

Despairing of appealing to what may be the future, may I go back to the past. There was one man whom all the world, no matter what their notion or opinions might be, considered as a true type of a British Minister, representing in his own character and in his principles, and in his expositions of the opinion of the British people, all that was worthy of the British and the British Constitution, I mean Lord Palmerston, and may I ask on calm reflection what would be the opinion of that great man of the present state of the British nation, both at home and abroad at the present date?

I have not had much opportunity the last year of learning English opinion on the questions of the day from themselves personally. But last summer, having been selected as a church delegate to go to England on the Irish Church Question, I took the opportunity of enquiring personally from my acquaintances and the public generally—particularly in London, Manchester, and Liverpool—their opinions on that question, and also on the Irish Land Question, then looming in the distance. I found London indifferent on the Church Question, or nearly so. On

the contrary, I found Manchester and Liverpool changing their minds; and I firmly believe that had the House of Lords acted as they were expected to do, a proper reformation in the Church could have been arrived at, and not a revolution which has dissatisfied those whom it was least their policy to dissatisfy, and has not satisfied any. In London, however, I found a quite different feeling on the Land Question; and finding a great feeling of uneasiness, I went closely and extensively to find out why this feeling was so great, particularly in the West End; and I give the conversation of one gentleman whose opinion was worthy of consideration, and though very strongly expressed, fully bore out what I found to be the general impression:—"Sir, we knew little or nothing of the Irish Church. We were told that the Roman Catholics were paying the clergymen of the Protestant Established Church—we were told that your Church was an injustice to the great majority of the inhabitants—the question came on us without time for enquiry, and in fact we knew nothing about it. But no doubt, if what you and others state had been found to be true, we might, and perhaps possibly would, have changed our minds. It is now too late. But with regard to the Land Question, we, the English, know what pounds, shillings, and pence are, and what the rights of private property are—and you may make your mind easy, and depend that if Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright interfere with the rights of private property as they did with the Church property, they will hang as high in the air on nothing as did the Fenians at Manchester." The opinions of others went so far as to intimate you ought to do so.

I write, perhaps, in what may appear to you strong terms, but I write and will speak as others will now write and speak in Ireland, in the bitter terms of long pent-up dissatisfaction let loose. I write and will speak as one of those Irish classes which England has scarcely seen or heard of for 70 years—namely, the descendants of the Irish patriots of 1800, and the great body of the middle classes of all creeds. England for the last 70 years has only known and seen those who sold their country, (and were glad to have a country to sell,) and the laboring population who went to earn a scanty livelihood, but she will now find, having bided our time, quite a different class of Irish to deal with.

I append an address which has been presented to me by my tenants, and my reply. I believe my tenants express the opinion

of all the independent, respectable tenants of Ireland ; and I can only presume that the present Bill is introduced to try and please every body by pleasing nobody. As I have alluded to the Irish patriots, and to my ancestor, Colonel Irvine, knowing that it has been the habit in England to represent every person as a rebel who is dissatisfied with the English Government, I append, also, copies of the resolutions passed by the Ulster Volunteers, consisting of 143 corps, at a meeting held at Dungannon, on Friday, the 15th day of February, 1782. I publish these now in order to get rid of much misconception which has been industriously spread against the reputation of Irish patriots, at a time when our only hope for regeneration is for the Irish to have an independent vote and voice, at least in their local affairs and concerns. These resolutions were not the resolutions of rebels, but of men anxious for the good of their country, and only seeking for redress by legal and loyal means. The great difference with our ancestors and the English was not loyalty to the Crown, but, being free traders to the full extent that would satisfy Mr. Cobden or Mr. Bright, they had to deal with strict protectionists, who would neither allow their produce of flax or wool into England, and denied them, as far as they could, of free importation from foreign parts. The descendents of the patriots can look back on the rising prospects of Ireland before 1800, and look back to the load of debt, misery and misgovernment inflicted on us since 1800 up to the present. As the landlords of the present day have almost passed blameless through the ordeal of investigation through which their acts have passed under the prejudiced enquiries of agitators, correspondents of newspapers and the many other enemies they had, I do not intend to enter on any defence, or make any allusion to them, but I think it right to make allusion to the reports spread against our ancestors as to their conduct to the mere Irish. It is, no doubt, true that it was intended by the Government of the day that the Irish were to be discouraged ; but their intention was not carried out. There were, of course, cases of hardship and forfeiture of property, the same as happened in England when conquered by us Normans ; but the intention to eliminate the Irish were never carried out by the settlers ; on the contrary they soon became not only acclimatised, but in their ways "*Hibernis hiberniores*"—and the Irish were allowed to obtain land. This I can prove by my own rentals from 1630, and I can point to the fact that in 1845 O'Con-

nell stated there were eight millions of inhabitants in Ireland holding, under every possible sort of tenure, leases and no leases; holdings large and small; conacre, rundale and squatters without any tenure. So far from the landlords objecting to or discouraging this increase of inhabitants, they either took no notice of it or no means to stop it. Before the famine the Poor Laws were introduced, and I well recollect the assistant Poor Law Commissioners driving about the country taking maps and notes where the population was most thickly located, and reporting to the government that no landlord who allow their land to be so thickly inhabited had a right to hold land, and that the landlords who allowed it were acting injuriously to the State. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic priests were proclaiming to the Irish that their duty was to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. So before the famine no reproach could be laid against the Landlords by the Irish for ejecting or removing the Irish. The potato famine, however, changed all; and what the Government could not get the landlords to do directly, they did by the poor laws they passed themselves indirectly; and what I write now I have written to every Chief Secretary of Ireland since 1847, and I can refer to Mr. Power, Head Poor Law Commissioner for Ireland, have I not since 1847 drawn the attention of the Poor Law Commissioners unceasingly to the very great injustice and wrong to the Irish laborers and cottier class. I do not mean to say that the houses of the poor were deliberately levelled, but this I can state and prove, that after they left the workhouses, they found no houses to go into, and flocked into miserable hovels in the towns and villages, and against their doing so the owners of the towns had no remedy, inasmuch as it had been the fashion for Landlords to give leases for building, to create towns on their properties, which leases had no clauses against sub-letting. The result was and has been fearful to contemplate. Up to this the landlords were by the famine the slaves of circumstances, but since then there can be no doubt there was an inclination to enlarge farms, tacitly, if not openly encouraged by the English and the Government, who proclaimed that, as if the famine wave was not sufficient to pass over Ireland and the Irish, another wave was necessary. In 1852 I was High-Sheriff for the county Tyrone, I received a requisition to grant the use of the courthouse for a Tenant-right meeting, signed by 800 persons. On looking over the names I found there were not the

names of fifty bona fide tenant farmers signed to it, the majority being public-house-holders, shopkeepers, merchants whose great grievance was that the landowners had prior claim to the collecting of their debts, by the law of restraint. I therefore refused the use of the courthouse, suggesting at the same time that a laborer-right meeting was much more required as the middlemen of that day and the tenant farmers treated their laborers very badly; and I am still of opinion that with but few instances the tenant farmers require no redress, have had their lands cheaper and more free to do what they pleased with than any other tenant farmers in the world, but the laborers have not had the same opportunity, however, from experience and knowledge, the laboring classes will be very hard to deal with. Many landlords have tried, and tried in vain to improve their dwellings, and make them live more comfortable, and the only instance in which I have heard of success is that of the Earl of Bessborough. I do not wish to throw cold water on any plan which would create thriving, industrious, laboring population; but I would have great fears that the plan proposed under the Irish Land Bill unfettered as it is, by any conditions would be the means of encouraging and creating such a class. For the difficulties with which landlords have had to contend, I refer to Mr. and Mrs. Hall's Ireland, and I am certain no writers were ever more in earnest in trying to raise the character, or smooth down the faults of the Irish peasants than they were. A bill to make a bad landlord do near what the good landlord does himself towards his tenants, the bad tenant act as a good tenant to his landlord, to ameliorate the condition of the peasantry without doing injustice to any class, would be acceptable to all right-minded individuals in every class. The bill proposed at present does exactly the very contrary, gives the good landlord nothing, but puts him to the disadvantage of petty law in petty courts, at the suit of all his bad tenants, renders his property of far less value as being less saleable and less negociable as a security, gives the good tenant no more advantage than he has, but places the bad tenant in a position to annoy his landlord to leave his farm neglected and unimproved, and when spoken to, to reply in the usual Irish, unimproving tenants saying:—"Sure you get your rent, what more do you want."

May 2nd, 1870.

I have again to defer forwarding this letter to you in order

to state a further outrage committed upon me, and if matters go on as they are, the letter may never be ended.

On Sunday evening, the 1st of May, I fortunately dined one hour earlier than usual, and retired to bed an hour earlier. Immediately after I retired to bed, my butler rushed up to my room, stating that he had been fired at by one of two men, but that, fortunately, the gun had missed fire. I immediately ordered a carriage and brought the man to the police barracks (which adjoins the entrance gate to my park), my valet promising to have a look-out round the Castle. I was only absent about ten minutes, and was returning home when my valet met the carriage and stated that I had better not go down, as there were two assassins at the Castle with blunderbusses; that they presented the blunderbusses at him, and were going to fire, when one of them said "It is not him." There can be no doubt that it was intended to carry out the threatening notice against me, and fortunately failed. Under the circumstances I intend to place myself (and have already done so) in a position to defy all the Ribbonmen in Ireland. I have enrolled two hundred of my tenants as a vigilance committee, ten of whom are to mount guard nightly, and the remainder to surround the Park on the ringing of the Castle bell. The Castle itself is so fortified that six men inside it could defy hundreds; and as the Government of the country are totally helpless to protect me or any one else, I will not only protect myself, but be in a position to assist a relative of mine who is also threatened. I append an address to the Ribbonmen. I hope that all the gentlemen in Ireland will follow my example, and do privately and from their private resources what, before long, I hope all respectable men of all parties in Ireland may do publicly as United Irishmen or Irish Volunteers for Ireland. There is now plainly no resource but to put no trust in Government, but in ourselves.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY MERVYN D'ARCY IRVINE.

Petty Sessions (Ireland) Act, 1851; 14 & 15 Vict., cap. 93.
(Form A. a.) Information.

H. M. D'Arcy Irvine, Esq., Castle Irvine, complainant

Defendant.

Petty Sessions District of Irvinestown, County of Fermanagh.
The Information of Henry White, of Castle Irvine, who saith on

his oath—That about eleven o'clock on the night of Sunday, the 1st of May, 1870, I was on the top of the stone stairs when William called to me to come down, that some one had been firing a cap at him. He went and told Mr. D'Arcy Irvine of it who came down to his dressing-room and got ready and left the house to go to the town. After he was gone, I went up to Master Huntley, and then came down again and waited outside the front door; after I was there two or three minutes, I heard a noise on the gravel; I stepped round the corner and saw two men, one short and the other tall; the tall one had whiskers, the short one had not. I took a couple of steps forward, when the short man put up a gun, presented it at me. The tall man said "That's not the one." They then turned and went round the corner, between a run and a trot; both men had short guns; I came in and got the lock to fasten the back door after me, till I went up to the town to meet Mr. D'Arcy Irvine to tell him what had happened. And the said informant binds himself to attend when called on to give evidence against the said for the said offence, or otherwise forfeit to the Crown the sum of £10.

Signed, HENRY WHITE, Informant.

Taken before me this 2nd day of May, in the year Eighteen Hundred and Seventy, at Castle Irvine, in the said county.

Signed, FRANCIS D'ARCY, Justice of said county.

Petty Sessions (Ireland) Act, 1851; 14 & 15 Vict., Cap. 93.
(Form A. a.) Information.

H. M. D'Arcy Irvine, Castle Irvine, complainant;

Defendant.

Petty Sessions District of Irvinestown; County of Fermanagh, The information of William Hannigan, of Castle Irvine, who saith on his oath—That about eleven o'clock on the night of Sunday, the 1st of May, I went out of the back door at Castle Irvine for the purpose of nature; on turning the corner at the ash-pit I distinctly heard the snap of a percussion cap, and saw the flash of it; I ran back as quick as I could and told Mr. D'Arcy Irvine. I served in her Majesty's Navy for ten years, and have no hesitation in saying it was the snap of a gun cap I heard. And the said informant binds himself to attend when called on to prosecute the said for the said offence, or otherwise to forfeit to the Crown the sum of £10.

Signed, WM. HANNIGAN, Informant.

Taken before me this 2nd day of May, in the year Eighteen Hundred and Seventy, at Castle Irvine, in the said county.

Signed, FRANCIS D'ARCY, Justice of said county.

A D D R E S S
TO
HENRY MERVYN D'ARCY IRVINE, ESQ.
BY THE
TENANTRY OF THE CASTLE IRVINE ESTATES.

Irvinestown, April 27, 1870.

SIR,—We, the Tenantry of the Castle Irvine Estate, assembled here in consequence of having been informed that you have been served with a Threatening Notice—that your death is decided upon by that band of murderers so long desolating our country—scarcely deign to repudiate for ourselves, or for any individual in this locality, the authorship of any such missive.

If any gentleman in Ireland should be free from such an intrusion, it is well known you should be that person, whether as a landlord, or employer of labor, or as owner of the many improvements you have made on this property—spending your entire time, wealth, and energy, for the development of every resource of which the estate and the country is capable. During the famine you risked your life to save the poor—as an employer of laborers you were the first to raise the wages in Ireland and in this district—and in every relation between landlord and tenant we can vouch that your dealings with us have been honorable, straightforward and fair.

We, therefore, having met, think it right to protest that in the present day such a state of things could exist in any civilized country as has existed in Ireland for the last 20 years. Borrowing from the article in the *Times* of the 26th, on the state of Greece—“Thus we have not only the fact of brigandage generally being still in existence, but the fact that particular bands of malefactors have been actually infesting the country for a long time, and have evaded all attempts to capture them, if any such attempts have been made. What conclusion are we to draw from this but that the government is either powerless or scandalously negligent of the very first of its duties? The state of the country is notorious, and yet as month after month passes away, the

brigands remain undisturbed." "We have no hesitation in saying that the time has come when this scandalous misgovernment should be brought to an end."

With respect to the notices to quit which you are serving upon us, we perfectly understood that it was, if possible, to have amicable arrangements made outside the court, which the new Land Bill enacts is to be the only source of contract between Landlord and Tenant, annulling entirely the old and cherished right of private contract; and we, as well as you, would repudiate making our contracts in any law courts or by any judge. By the new Land Bill, we, your Tenants, would gain nothing, and we would incur the risk of coming under a Bill which is drawn up as if designedly to make ill-will and litigation where none actually at present exist. And we would decline to be classed as acceptors of a measure which will be passed not as an act of justice, but a sop to murderers; and thereby branding the name of Cain on the forehead of every respectable Tenant in Ireland. We cannot believe but that if there were the will, there would be the way, to pass a Bill which, the results of wise legislation, would protect the Landlord against a bad Tenant and the Tenant against the bad Landlord. Of all such provisions—such as providing for register's improvements and written agreements in every case, the Bill seems entirely destitute. We would also much regret the passing of the present Land Bill, as it would be no doubt injurious to your property, with its saleable and marketable value.

Wishing you and your heir very many happy years to enjoy the estate, we are your obedient and devoted Tenantry,

Signed on behalf of the Tenantry,

SAMUEL DOUGLAS.
ROBERT JOHNSON.
HIRAM DUFFY.
MICHAEL O'BRIEN.
PATRICK GILLESPIE.
JOHN GRAHAM.
GERARD JOHNSTON.
HUGH REILLY.
JAMES L. MILLER.
GEORGE O'GORMAN.

HUGH KEYS.
BERNARD MAGUIRE.
IRVINE JOLLY.
FELIX M'LOUGHLIN.
JOHN M'BRIERTY.
THOMAS CAMPBELL.
WILLIAM DARRAGH.
WILLIAM MAGRATH.
BENJAMIN COWAN.
WILLIAM IRVINE.

ROBERT ANDERSON, Chairman.

R E P L Y .

Castle Irvine, Irvinestown,
April 29, 1870.

GENTLEMEN,

It is with much pain, at the same time accompanied with pleasure, that I have received your address : pain that such an occasion should offer to receive an address from you, and pleasure that when it does offer you should consider me entitled to such an address. I cannot, however, say that the occasion occurring creates any surprise in me. There is one of my duties which I fulfilled amongst you to which you have not alluded, namely, the duties of a justice of the peace; but I am fully aware of the opinion you hold as to the manner in which the duties of that office were carried out both by my father and by myself. Holding the commission of the peace as I did, under my commission, to secure the peace of the country to all her Majesty's subjects, I found it to be my imperative duty so to remonstrate with the Government of the day as to the manner in which they were levelling down the office of magistrate, in a manner unconstitutional and beyond the just limit of their executive authority, I left them designedly no resource but to supersede me, and I did so from the abundant evidence I had daily presented to me that, consistent with my honor, I could not carry out the duties which I was bound to do in a manner consistent with respect to myself and to the office. Nor was the levelling down system confined to the magistrates alone, but affected every department of the State in Ireland, until it became universally recognised that good conduct and merit were worthless considerations for promotion, and that the "Royal road" to it was through agitation, disaffection and disloyalty. By the people this was well understood. I had occasion once in your market place very decidedly to state these opinions, when one of the crowd called out "They would soon hang you if they could catch you." In a threatening letter I received from America the writer there states—"I always considered the Irish peasantry very quiet and well-disposed when they did not shoot you. You are a curse to society, and your old father was the same. Did you ever see anything changing like the times in Ireland? and how the cat jumps there now." The cat is made to jump by agitators in parliament and out of parliament, in office and out of office, accessories before and after the fact, whose conduct is

more blameable than that of the actors, as being more cowardly

Gentlemen, you state in your address in the words of the *Times* newspaper—"We have no hesitation in saying that the time has come when this scandalous misgovernment should be brought to an end." Gentlemen, I have no hesitation in stating that, having failed in getting relief from the government, and as murders and threatening notices are spreading from one class of society to every class, it is the bounden duty of every well-disposed and loyal man in Ireland to use the power which God has given us of protecting ourselves, and girding up our loins to say "Every man for himself, and God for us all;" and taking advantage of this opportunity, I appeal to every man in Ireland who cares for his nation, let his creed be what it may, and I make this appeal as the descendant and representative of an Irish patriot, Colonel Irvine, who, as chairman of the great meeting of Irish Volunteers in Dungannon in 1782, signed a resolution—"We know our duty to our Sovereign, and are loyal; we know our duty to ourselves, and are resolved to be *Free*." And I call upon you to be "United Irishmen"—be divided no longer, so as to be the tool of any other nation or any other party, and let our motto be "Live and let live." And as my ancestors voted and used all their energy to prevent the union with England, I would now use all my influence and advice to create *union with Irishmen*, and Ireland may be, what Nature intended her to be—

"Great, glorious and free,
First flower of the earth,
First gem of the sea."

I am, gentlemen,

Yours very sincerely,

HENRY MERVYN D'ARCY IRVINE. 3

TO THE
TENANTRY OF THE CASTLE IRVINE ESTATES.

GENTLEMEN,

The threatening notice served upon me has been followed up by an attempt to execute the threat, by two assassins. In 1641 you assisted my ancestor to defend Castle Irvine. In 1680 you rescued out of the Gaol of Derry a brother of my ancestor, Colonel William Irvine, who commanded you against Sir Charles Coote, the governor. In the late war the Irvinestown Yeomanry Corps did active service in the West, under the command of my grandfather, against the French, and received the thanks of the government.

I have now to ask your assistance against the band of rebels and marauders who are infesting the country.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY MERVYN D'ARCY IRVINE.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

Castle Irvine,

Irvinestown, May 2, 1870.

In consequence of threatening letters having been received, and an attempt to put the threat into execution, undertaken by two assassins, Castle Irvine and the Park have been put into a state of seige—and the public are requested and cautioned not to enter the grounds, as I have no idea of using any politeness, but intend to have the first shot.

HENRY MERVYN D'ARCY IRVINE.

TO THE RIBBONMEN OF IRELAND.

Castle Irvine, Irvinestown,

May 4, 1870.

You served me with a threatening notice to murder me, and immediately on serving it, endeavoured to carry it out, but failed, through the mercy of Providence. But as God protects those best who best protect themselves, I have placed myself in a position to defy you. My tenantry have enrolled themselves in a body—my Castle and Park are placed in a state of seige, and as far as the best of weapons, handled by good men, can protect it, we will. The men you have to deal with are not unused to the same business—we're not cotton spinners—what property we have we got by the sword—and can hold by the sword. We are loyal and peaceable, and have no trouble in life, but to rid ourselves of brigands and murderers; and plunderers paying the government for doing it, we will make it now more sure by doing it for ourselves; and as, if the opportunity offers you would give no quarter, neither will we.

HENRY MERVYN D'ARCY IRVINE

At a Meeting of the Representatives of ONE HUNDRED and FORTY THREE CORPS of VOLUNTEERS of the Province of ULSTER, held at DUNGANNON on Friday, the 15th Day of February, 1782.

COLONEL WILLIAM IRVINE in the Chair.

WHEREAS it has been asserted, "That Volunteers, as such, cannot with propriety, debate or publish their opinions, on political subjects, or on the conduct of parliament, or public men."

Resolved unanimously, That a citizen, by learning the use of arms, does not abandon any of his civil rights.

Resolved unanimously, That a claim of any body of men, other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, to make laws to bind this kingdom, is unconstitutional, illegal, and a *grievance*.

Resolved (with one dissenting voice only) that powers exercised by Privy Council of both kingdoms, under, or under colour or pretence of the Law of Poyning's, are unconstitutional, and a *grievance*.

Resolved unanimously, That the ports of this country are, by right, open to all foreign countries, not at war with the king, and that any burthen thereupon, or obstruction thereto, save only by the parliament of Ireland, are unconstitutional, illegal, and a *grievance*.

Resolved (with one dissenting voice only) That a Mutiny Bill, not limited in point of duration, from session to session, is unconstitutional, and a *grievance*.

Resolved unanimously, That the independence of judges is equally essential to the impartial administration of justice in Ireland, as in England, and that the refusal or delay of this right to Ireland, makes a distinction where there should be no distinction, may excite jealousy where perfect union should prevail, and is, in itself, unconstitutional, and a *grievance*.

Resolved (with eleven dissenting voices only) that it is our

decided and unalterable determination, to seek a redress of those grievances; and we pledge ourselves to each other, and to our country, as freeholders, fellow-citizens, and men of honour, that we will, at every ensuing election, support those only who have supported, and will support us therein, and that we will use all constitutional means to make such pursuit of redress speedy and effectual.

Resolved (with one dissenting voice only) That the right honourable and honourable the minority in parliament, who have supported these our constitutional rights, are entitled to our most grateful thanks, and that the annexed address be signed by the chairman, and published with these resolutions.

Resolved unanimously, That four members from each county of the province of Ulster, eleven to be a quorum, be, and are hereby appointed a committee till next general meeting, to act for the Volunteer Corps here represented, and as occasion shall require, to call general meetings of the province, viz.

Ld. Visc. Enniskillen	Major Charles Duffin
Col. Mervyn Archdall	Capt. John Harvey
Col. William Irvine	Capt. Robert Campbell
Col. Rob. M'Clintock	Capt. Joseph Pollock
Col. John Ferguson	Capt. Wad. Cunningham
Col. John Montgomery	Capt. Francis Evans
Col. Charles Leslie	Capt. John Cope
Col. Francis Lucas	Capt. James Dawson
Col. Tho. M. Jones	Capt. James Atcheson
Col. James Hamilton	Capt. Dan. Eccles
Col. And. Thompson	Capt. Tho. Dickson
Lieut. Col. C. Nesbitt	Capt. David Bell
Lieut. Col. A. Stewart	Capt. John Coulston
Major Patterson	Capt. Rob. Black
Major Francis Dobbs	Rev. Wm. Crawford
Major James M'Clintock	Mr. Rob. Thompson.

Resolved unanimously, That said committee do appoint nine of their members to be a committee in Dublin, in order to communicate with such other Volunteer associations in the other provinces, as may think proper to come to similar resolutions, and to deliberate with them on the most constitutional means of carrying them into effect. In consequence of the above resolution,

the committee have appointed the following gentlemen for said committee, three to be a quorum, viz.

Col. Mervy. Archdall
 Col. Wm. Irvine
 Col. John Montgomery
 Col. T. M. Jones
 Major Francis Dobbs

Capt. Francis Evans
 Capt. James Dawson
 Capt. Joseph Pollock
 Mr. Robert Thompson.

Resolved unanimously, That the Committee be, and are hereby instructed to call a general meeting of the province, within twelve months from this day, or in fourteen days after the dissolution of the present Parliament, should such an event sooner take place.

Resolved unanimously, That the Court of Portugal have acted towards this kingdom (being a part of the British empire) in such a manner as to call upon us to declare and pledge ourselves to each other, that we will not consume any wine of the growth of Portugal, and that we will, to the extent of our influence, prevent the use of said wine, save and except the wine at present in this kingdom, until such time as our exports shall be received in the kingdom of Portugal, as the manufactures of part of the British Empire.

Resolved (with two dissenting voices only, to this and the following resolution) That we hold the right of private judgment, in matters of religion, to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves,

Resolved therefore, That as Men and as Irishmen, as Christians and as Protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the *Penal Laws* against our *Roman Catholic fellow-subjects*, and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland.

Resolved unanimously, That the Dundalk Independent Troop of Light Dragons, commanded by Captain Thomas Read, having joined a regiment of this province (the first Newry regiment or Newry Legion) and petitioning to be received as part of this body, and under its protection, is accordingly hereby received.

Whereas a letter has been received by the chairman of this meeting from the united corps of the county of Cavan, Colonel Ennery in the chair, declaring their readiness to co-operate with

their brother Volunteers in every constitutional support of their rights ;

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this meeting be presented to the said united corps of the said county of Cavan for their spirited resolution, and that a copy of the proceedings of this meeting be inclosed by the chairman to Colonel Ennery, to be by him communicated to the said united corps, and that they shall have a right, if they choose, to associate with the corps represented at this meeting, to nominate four members to act with those already appointed as a committee by the delegates at this meeting.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this meeting be presented to Captain Richardson and the Dungannon Light Company, for their politeness in mounting guard this day.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this meeting be presented to the Southern Battalion of the First Ulster Regiment, commanded by the Earl of Charlemont, for that patriotic zeal which we are convinced induced them to call this meeting.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this meeting be presented to Colonel William Irvine, for his particular propriety and politeness of conduct in the chair.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this meeting be presented to Captain James Dawson, for his readiness in undertaking the office of Secretary to this meeting, and for his particular attention and ability in the laborious duty thereof.

Resolved unanimously, That these resolutions be published.

To the Right Honourable and Honourable the Minority in both Houses of Parliament.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

We thank you for your noble and spirited, though hitherto ineffectual efforts in defence of the great constitutional and commercial rights of your country. Go on—the almost unanimous voice of the people is with you ; and, in a free country, the voice of the people *must* prevail. We know our duty to our Sovereign, and are loyal.—We know our duty to ourselves, and are resolved to be free. We seek for our rights, and no more than our rights, and, in so just a pursuit, we should doubt the being of a Providence, if we doubted of success.

signed by order,

WM. IRVINE.