

CONSTITUTION OF THE IRISH CONFEDERATION.

From *The Life of John Mitchel* by P.A Sillard, published 1908.

Resolved: That inasmuch as letters published by two members of this Council have brought into question the principles of the Irish Confederation, and have given rise to an imputation that we are desirous to produce a general disorganisation of society in this country, and to overthrow social order, we deem it right to place before the public the following fundamental rules, which constitute the basis of action proposed to our fellow-countrymen by the Irish Confederation: -

- I. That a society be now formed under the title of the 'Irish Confederation,' for the purpose of protecting our national interests, and obtaining the legislative independence of Ireland, by the force of opinion, by the combination of all classes of Irishmen, and the exercise of all the political, social, and moral influences within our reach.
- II. That (under the present circumstances) the only hope of the liberation of this country lies in a movement in which all classes and all creeds of Irishmen shall be fairly represented, and by which the interests of none shall be endangered.
- III. That inasmuch as English legislation threatens all Irishmen with a common ruin, we entertain a confident hope their common necessities will speedily unite Irishmen in an effort to get rid of it.
- IV. That we earnestly deprecate the expression of any sentiments in the Confederation calculated to repel or alarm any section of our fellow-countrymen.
- V. That we disclaim, as we have disclaimed, any intention of involving our country in civil war, or of invading the just rights of any portion of its people.
- VI. That the Confederation has not recommended, nor does it recommend, resistance to the payment of rates and rents, but,

on the contrary, unequivocally condemns such recommendations.

- VII. That, in protesting against the disarmament of the Irish people, under the Coercion Bill lately enacted, and in maintain that the right to bear arms, and to use them for legitimate purposes, is one of the primary attributes of liberty, we have had no intention or desire to encourage any portion of the population of this country in the perpetration of crimes, such as those which have recently brought disgrace upon the Irish people, and which have tended in no trifling degree to retard the success of our efforts in the cause of national freedom.
- VIII. That to hold out to the Irish the hope that, in this present broken and divided condition, they can liberate their country by an appeal to arms, and consequently to divert them from constitutional action, would be, in our opinion, a fatal misdirection of the public mind.
- IX. That this Confederation was established to obtain an Irish Parliament by the combination of classes, and by the force of opinion, exercised in constitutional operations; and that no means of a contrary character can be recommended or promoted through its organisation, while its present fundamental rules remain unaltered.
- X. That while we deem it right thus emphatically to disavow the principles propounded in the publications referred to in the resolution, we at the same time equally distinctly repudiate all right to control *the private opinions* of any member of our body, provided they do not affect the legal or moral responsibility of the Irish Confederation.