

LETTER TO THE NEW YORK HERALD.

By John Mitchel.

**Published in the days before his departure for Ireland, February
1875. Addressed to the editor of the *Herald*, James Gordon
Bennett.**

Through the courtesy of the *New York Herald* I use the universal publicity of its special telegraphic column, to say a few words to my friends in America, concerning this Tipperary Election now still pending.

It is already known to you that an election did take place nearly three week since; that I was returned without opposition; that that election was complete, and a certificate of my return lodged in the Hanaper Office. It is needless to record the extraordinary scene of rage and trepidation which ensued on that event, and the headlong hurry with which Mr. Disraeli pressed the House to annul my election by a resolution.

It was in vain that even English Liberal Members of Parliament remonstrated against the shameful haste with which ministers called upon them to do so grave an act without inquiry. A motion was made by an Irish Home Rule Member for delay, and most of the Liberal members voted for this resolution, so that the strange sight was presented of Mr. Gladstone and the Home Rulers walking into the same lobby.

But nothing could check the ardour of the Ministry. The doors of that House must be instantly barred and bolted against me, or all was lost. In fact, the new writ was issued that night, and we are now in the midst of a second election for Tipperary. It would not give it up so neither would I. The people of this fine county have shown such enthusiasm and such unanimity that my friends hoped that no one would venture to be nominated against me – that it would a second walk over followed by a second annulment of the election, and a new writ again.

The Government, however, determined to cut the matter short. This could not be done even by a show of opposition, because on a contested election a petition against the return gives Government the power under a new act of Parliament, to refer the whole matter to the Court of Common Pleas, whose judges in Ireland alone are made absolute judges for contested elections, so that on the nomination day, the 4th March, my nomination was received early in the day.

The hours passed on without the least symptoms of opposition until within five minutes of the time when the Sheriff must have declared me duly elected, as he had done before – just then two ranks of police, with muskets and fixed bayonets, marched up the hall of the Court-house, and between these two ranks an individual was seen to hurry along towards the Sheriff's room. This was a Mr. Moore, of Barne, and he is the gentlemen against whom I am to poll in Tipperary, on the 11th inst.

If returned I will not go to Parliament, and I never intended to do so, because I have never seen what benefit Tipperary or any other county has ever derived from being represented in that Parliament. Then if my return is petitioned against, and I am referred to the Court of Common Pleas to decide the question, I will not go to the Court of Common Pleas. I will not defend my return before the Tribunal. Counsel learned in the law have warned me that there is no use in resorting to that court in any political case. The Court will gravely unseat me, and this Mr. Moore will remain the sitting member. That will be the end of Tipperary election for this time.

Tipperary will stand virtually disenfranchised, besides being pretty exasperated by the outrage flung upon that fine people. Next I mean to turn my attention to some other county, and to get that disfranchised, so on to a third, a great object which I have in view, being to show the Irish people the way in which they may gradually shake off the oppression of a pretended Parliamentary franchise.

On the whole, I am much pleased with the campaign that we have made, and I am very proud of Tipperary. We have stirred up the pride of more than one county, and have shown the English Ministers that the Irish if they like, can always drive them to more and more

lawless precedents and practices, and, at the worst, can do without them and their Parliament.

This, I believe, will be a great point gained, and as to the Home Rule Members in Parliament, their position will certainly derive strength from the temper now raised throughout the country, and English Ministers may say that it is better to yield something of the demand of those moderate and loyal gentlemen than to have all the felons in Ireland thundering at our gates, for they dare still to call me a felon, though they know that I never was a felon, never was tried, never was convicted, never was lawfully imprisoned. All this is a matter which needs to be cleared up.

In the meantime this contest has roused the people out of apathy, which seemed to be creeping over them, and before the present struggle is over, I trust, every Irishman will understand the regal policy it behoves him to follow with the English, viz. to discredit their courts, to spit upon the franchise which they pretend to allow us, and especially to overthrow the whole system of Parliamentary representation, which is not only the most deadly machinery by which our oppression is carried on, but all furnishes the cunningest excuse for asserting that we consent to, and aid in that oppression.

Signed,
JOHN MITCHEL.