

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE ST. PATRICK'S CONFEDERATE CLUB.

By John Mitchel.

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Newgate, Friday, One O'Clock.

MY DEAR SIR – In taking farewell of the St. Patrick's Club, which I do with deep gratitude, for their unwavering kindness to me, I wish to make some remarks to them on the position of the cause.

There is no reason to be dispirited, *provided* the Confederates will, from this day forth, insist on an *aggressive* course of action being entered on and steadfastly persevered in; I mean that a resolute stand should be taken for right and justice against 'law,' and for the common privileges of manhood against police constables and soldiers.

I tell you it will never do to recognise for one instant their ruffian acts of Parliament for laws, nor to suffer continual insults and buffetings at the hands of men in blue coats armed with truncheons. The spirit of no nation could live through such an ordeal, if it be much longer continued. You may organise, and recruit, and arm, and what you call *prepare*, till harvest, or till an European war, or till the sky falls; but the cause will be going back instead of forward.

Now, to insure safe and rapid progress, the Confederation absolutely needs a more efficient executive head. I need have no delicacy on this point, because I have expressed to the principal members of the Council in person my decided opinion that the Council has not been doing its duty, and that, constituted as it is, real service of the sort now wanted is not to be expected from it. The Council is at present, and always has been, a clique or close borough; and the practice of adding at pleasure to its own numbers has a tendency to make it become continually more and more of a clique, and less and less independent and effective. Do not understand me as intending to undervalue either the character or the abilities of most of the 'leaders,' as they are called, now in the Council. For several of them, and

especially for my dear friend, Mr. Meagher, I have the highest esteem and regard. But I say, that constituted as the Council is, arranged as all its proceedings are, in a select circle of gentlemen, no bold forward movement is to be expected.

I mean, in short, that the Confederates, the Clubs, the *People* in some form, should actually elect the members of the Council – say for six months, and not by any means suffer it to add to its own numbers. Of course, this would violate the ‘Convention Act,’ which I consider an additional argument in favour of the thing I suggested. It is plain that no *unpacked* Jury will ever convict for sedition in Ireland, and I hold it to be absolutely essential to the cause, that we should continually put the government to the disgraceful and diabolical resources of *packing*. This is needful, in order to rouse indignation, to excite all honest and manly feeling in the country in our favour, to show what British government in this country really rests upon – viz., force, corruption, perjury, and blasphemy; but, above all, it is needful, in order to keep alive and increase the *spirit* of the people. Believe me, it is not arms, it is not food, it is not organization, opportunity, or ‘union,’ or foreign sympathy Ireland wants – it is spirit – a proud, defiant, intolerance of slavery, and scorn of pretended ‘legal penalties,’ as well as other personal consequences. When this soul has come into Ireland, her opportunity is come, till then – never! never!!

I know that in writing this to you I subject myself to the imputation (which I bear some Confederates dare to cast on men who hold such sentiments) that I am an agent of the British government, hired to excite what is called a ‘premature insurrection.’ Let me entreat the Club to look with dislike upon any of its members who is ready to make such charges lightly against others. This wretched cowardly spirit of mutual suspicion is really the most fatal element I see in our movement at present; and the man amongst us who charges another with so hateful a crime, or hints it, or says such or such conduct, opinions, or advice, look *like* such an iniquity, ought indeed, to be prepared to substantiate the charge at his peril. Our proceedings hitherto have been public and above board, and I had hopes that our excellent principle of no concealment would have got rid entirely of the mischief of informers and detectives, and their odious trade. But I

find that the mutual distrust created by continual hints of their existence, may as disastrously effect our action as the very things themselves.

I do not know that I have more to say to you, except to exhort you earnestly to go on. The villanies of these criminal prosecutions must show every one of you that it is now only the more necessary to provide arms and ammunition so as to have the *power* and *spirit* – the opportunity will come from Heaven – to abolish the frightful system which, under the names of law and government, lays waste, and beggars, and degrades our noble country. – I remain, dear Sir, your sincere friend.

JOHN MITCHEL.