

SPEECH AT GALWAY, 24th OCTOBER 1880.

By Charles Stewart Parnell.

Mr. Chairman and people of the city and county of Galway, it gives me great pleasure to stand in the county which was the second in Ireland to take up the great movement which was started last May twelve-month by Michael Davitt, at Irishtown. You have nobly upheld that cause from that day to this day, in the face of every difficulty and discouragement, despite of the famine that threatened to carry you off in thousands last winter; and you will uphold that cause to-day in spite of the thousands of police and military that that hypocritical Chief Secretary and pretended Liberal Government have hurried into this country.

If famine was not able to subdue you last winter, neither will the threat of taxation for additional people conquer you today. Now, your chairman has deprecated assassination and violence as being unnecessary to win your cause, and very properly and justly deprecated it, and at all the land meetings which had been held up to the time when extra police were planted down in the county of Mayo, I also took care to join in that condemnation; but I utterly refuse further to allow any credence to be attached to the charges which have been made against us and our people by the English press, by in future deprecating outrage and crime which do not, and have not existed; and if it were otherwise, I say that the conduct of the Government, in violating the engagement upon which we gave them the votes for the Constabulary, after seven nights' debate, and in sending these extra police into the famine-stricken counties of Galway, Mayo, and Kerry, disentitles them to my advocacy in assisting them to uphold an unjust and an infamous law.

What is responsible? Who are responsible for the murders of landlords which have from time to time, at all times in our history, taken place in this country? It is admitted by everybody that English made law is responsible, and I say that the people who are primarily

responsible for the murder of Lord Mountmorres, if it was an agrarian crime, and of that I have very great doubt, are the House of Lords, who, by rejecting the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, took the arbitrament of this question from the Courts of Law, and placed it in the hands of the people; and the man who is secondarily responsible is this pretended humanitarian Chief Secretary of ours, buckshot Foster, who, when the House of Lords kicked out his bill, and smote him on one cheek, turned to them the other cheek to smite also. He foresaw then, and he publicly stated in the House of Commons, that he anticipated an increase of crime, outrage, and loss of life in Ireland, and yet in the face of that he deliberately refused to keep Parliament together, and to force through the House of Lords a measure which would prevent him from being made the instrument of landlord tyranny and justice.

Well, you are left to your own resources, as the people of Ireland always have been left, as far as anything that the Parliament of England ever has done or is ever likely to do for you; and I suppose that we shall witness the usual crop of prosecutions this winter, the return to the old policy of coercion, which has always been the resort of English statesmen after they have found out that England is unable to govern Ireland. I anticipated this when this great Liberal Ministry came into power, of which we have heard so much, and of whose professions we have heard so many. I expressed my belief at the beginning of last session, that the present Chief Secretary, who was then all smiles and promises, would not have proceeded very far in the duties of his office before he would have found that he had undertaken an impossible task to govern Ireland, and that the only way to govern Ireland is to allow her to govern herself.

And if they prosecute the leaders in this movement, it will not be because they wish to preserve the lives of one or two landlords – much the English Government care about the lives of one or two landlords, but it will be because they see that behind this movement there is a more dangerous movement, to have a hold over Ireland, because they know that if they fail in upholding landlordism here, and they will fail, they have no chance of maintaining it in Ireland, because they know that if they fail in upholding landlordism in Ireland, their

power to misrule Ireland will go too. I wish to see the tenant-farmers prosperous; but large and important as is the class of tenant-farmers, constituting as they do, with their wives and families, the majority of the people of this country, I would not have taken off my coat and gone to this work, if I had not known that we were laying the foundations by this movement for the recovery of our legislative independence. Push on then towards this goal, extend your organization, and let every tenant-farmer, while he keeps a firm grip of his holding, recognise also the great truth that he is serving his country and the people at large, and helping to break down English misrule in Ireland.