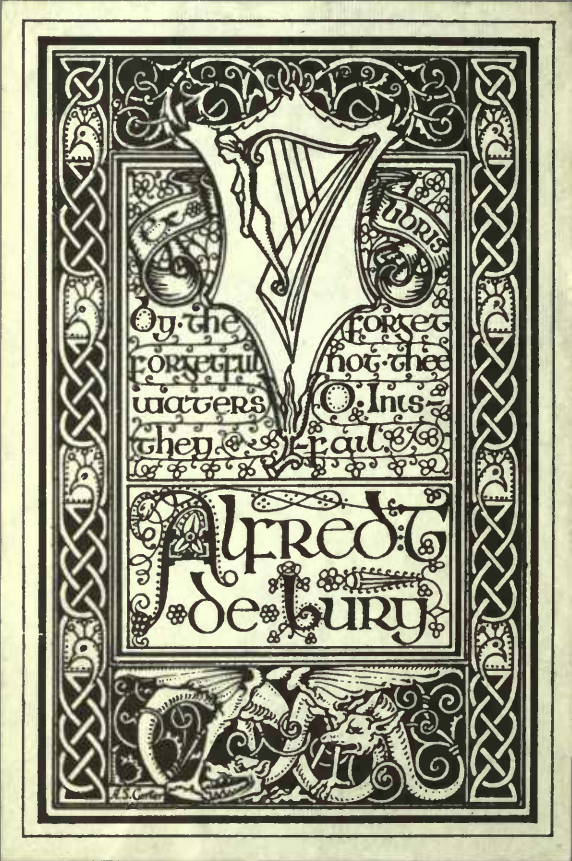


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# N ULSTERMAN OR IRELAND

JOHN MITCHEL



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Trí cainnele forghnāt each n-odmha: rí,   
 dīcneð, ecna.

Three candles that light up every darkness :  
 Truth, Nature, Knowledge.

THE TRIADS OF IRELAND.

# AN ULSTERMAN FOR IRELAND

BEING LETTERS TO THE PROTESTANT FARMERS, LABOURERS, AND ARTISANS OF THE NORTH OF IRELAND. BY JOHN MITCHEL WITH A FOREWORD BY EOIN MAC NEILL.

DUBLIN: THE CANDLE PRESS  
158 RATHGAR ROAD. 1917

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FOR IRELAND

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## FOREWORD

**J**OHAN MITCHEL, an Ulster Protestant, wrote these letters to the Ulster Protestant democracy in April and May of 1848. The disgraceful Treason-Felony Act had just been enacted, enabling the Government to treat Irish political offences on a level with the vilest crimes. Ireland had just passed through three years of famine and famine-fever, the unchecked consequences of her ruthless Government, and had paid the toll of a million Irish lives; and to remedy her condition the Imperial Parliament enacted the Treason-Felony Act. An indictment for the newly invented crime was awaiting Mitchel, to his knowledge, at the time when he wrote these letters.

A recent French critic, having studied Mitchel's "Jail Journal," has done the entente cordiale the service of exposing Mitchel as a futile railer with no positive or constructive ideas and with no better basis for his Nationalism than bitter unreasoning rancour against England. I am sorry to say that the criticism has been adopted by some Irish writers. If after '47 no thought had remained in an Irishman's mind but the

one,—“*delenda est Carthago*”—will anyone who dares to face the facts of that time pretend to be surprised? What surprises me in these letters is the extraordinary coolness and patience of the man who, loving his own country, had seen her suffer the horrors of the Famine Years.

Nor was Mitchel's attitude purely negative and non-constructive. He laid down clearly the policy that Parnell afterwards took up, the policy which Gladstone declared to be “marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire”—“to lay the axe to the root of this rotten and hideous Irish landlordism, that we might see how much would come down along with it.” (p. 36). He saw that the enemy of Ireland was “British oligarchy” (p. 36), then in strict alliance, offensive and defensive, with Irish landlordism and Irish officialism. He warned his readers against expecting any good thing from the English Parliament or the English Government, and told them to trust themselves and make ready to defend themselves and their right to live and prosper in the land.

Seventy years ago, this Ulster Protestant poured scorn on the No-Popery campaign of the Ulster landlords. He showed how the English Whig, Lord Clarendon, was playing upon Ulster Protestant “loyalty.” The No-Popery campaign is still the main reliance of the British Oligarchy in Ireland, and only two years ago the English Liberal, Chief Secretary Birrell, was still exploiting the “loyalty” of those who (shall we say to his bitter grief?) were threatening armed

resistance to his inoffensive Home Rule Act. "The government of Ireland is a continuity." With the "Man of Sin" held at bay and "loyalty" in full play, let us see how the people of Ulster have fared during seventy years:

Ulster had in 1841	a population of	2,386,373
„ 1851	„	2,011,880
„ 1861	„	1,914,236
„ 1871	„	1,833,228
„ 1881	„	1,743,075
„ 1891	„	1,619,814
„ 1901	„	1,582,826
„ 1911	„	1,581,696

It will take a great deal of shouting to drown the noise of these figures. Even Sir Edward Carson, in his new and lucrative office of Truth Controller, will not be able to keep it up. "Extermination," wrote Mitchel, "is creeping northward." Mitchel, the Ulster Protestant, spoke nothing but the truth, and suffered for it. The day will come, in spite of all the machinery for controlling the truth, when Mitchel's truth will prevail among the Protestants of Ulster, and when they will sing again

Belfast, you may remember

When tyrants were in splendour.

EOIN MAC NEILL.

July, 1917.



## LETTER I.

WHEREVER public addresses have been heretofore made to you as Protestants they were always of one or other of these two kinds—either they came from your leaders, great landlords, Orange Grand Masters and such like grandees, and dwelt much on the enormities of “Romanism” and the treacherous devices of “the Man of Sin,” and on the necessity of strenuously resisting the plots of this same “Man of Sin” (who would appear to have some horrid designs upon you)—or else those addresses came from some “agitating” association or other of O’Connell’s that wanted your help, and so called you gallant fellows, and your fathers and grandfathers gallant fellows, reminded you of the volunteering, and asked you just to volunteer again and *follow them*, the agitating associations.

Neither of these was exactly the thing for you. The first showed too much zeal for Protestantism and too little for Tenant-right, or any other right of the poor. The second had always a certain air of fawning *blarney*, besides a suspiciously clerical aspect, that made you naturally recoil. The first adviser, for all his paternal language and anxiety about “our holy religion,” if you watched him closely, had ejections hid under his purple sash and orange apron—the other, with his liberalism and truly sincere admiration for your ancestors, appeared

too often masquerading in a "holy coat of Treves" or on his knees before the "venerated hierarchy." Neither of them quite met your case.

For your case was and is just this—the farmers are gradually, in Ulster as in other provinces, losing hold of the soil, under the pressure of poor rates, rents and taxes, and becoming labourers; and the labourers and artisans, from the excessive competition of other labourers and artisans, are sinking gradually into paupers, so that there is a continual sliding scale sloping downward to perdition. For every ruined farmer there is one destitute labourer the more, for every ejected cottier there is another pauper on the rates, and the still increasing rates weigh down faster and faster continually more and more of those who still struggle to earn their bread into the class which has given up the effort in despair, and thrown itself on the earnings of other men.

Is this or is it not a true statement of the case? And if it be, do you think it is to be remedied by a vow to defend our Protestant constitution in Church and State? It seems to me precisely our constitution in Church and State that has brought us to this condition—it certainly was not the Pope of Rome—the Pope, we know, is the "Man of Sin" and the "Antichrist," and also, if you like, the "Mystery of Iniquity," and all that, but he brings no ejectments in Ireland. The Seven Sacraments are, to be sure, very dangerous, but the quarter-acre clause touches you more nearly. In short, our vicious system of government, and especially

the infamous land laws, are the machinery that has brought you to this pass, and, as the very Grand Masters say nothing at all about mending these, let them keep their "addresses of loyalty" to themselves.

Then as for the mere "Repealers," they have long been asking you to join in an effort to restore the Irish Parliament as it stood before the Union. That is to say, to place Ireland and Irishmen and all that is theirs under the feet of the Irish "gentry," instead of the English and Irish gentry combined; and then our "Repealers" expect you to believe that straightway, on the assembling of Irish peers and Irish nominees of peers in College Green, by some magic or other, tenant-right and the rights of industry will be at once guaranteed to the people.

This kind of babble you have hitherto very properly neglected and despised. While a landlord Parliament rules over Ireland, whether the same sit in College Green or in Westminster, no popular rights will ever be acknowledged by "law." This is a fundamental axiom in politics; if any of you doubted it before, I hope that the manner in which you have been *defrauded* in the matter of Tenant-right within the last four years has at length convinced that doubter. Four years ago Lord Devon and several other landlord-commissioners found that in the North there actually was such a "practice" as the *sale of good-will*—so much these landlord-commissioners were forced to admit; but they took care to call it a mere practice, not a *right*, and a practice of *selling* not a *right*

to hold and enjoy till you were ready to sell. They further libelled the peaceable farmers of the North of Ireland by calling the sale of Tenant-right a mere "life insurance," asserting that an incoming tenant was always forced to pay the price of the outgoing tenant's good will, lest he should be *murdered*, and for that reason alone.

You have, I am sure, attended to the course of public affairs since these landlord-commissioners made their report: you have seen *four* successive bills brought into Parliament by ministers, both Whig and Tory (they are all the same), expressly, avowedly to *destroy* your tenant-right root and branch, to *rob* you openly of all you have in the world, and give you instead a title to be compensated for *future improvements*, provided they were effected according to an elaborate system of specifications which none of you could understand—to be compensated, I say, for these, or an unexpired interest in these,—whenever your landlords, the Grand Masters, might think proper to turn you out of house and home.

You have also observed, doubtless, the tricks of those same ministers (Whig and Tory) to evade the discussion of any of Mr. Sharman Crawford's bills, by which an imperfect tenant-right would actually have been established; and how, at length, when they could evade it no longer, they boldly threw it out, as an infringement on the "rights of property."

And you are further aware that the last deliberate attempt to defraud you, that known by the name of Sir William Somerville's bill—

instead of being dropped as you were at first led to believe, is this very week referred to a "select committee"—a very select committee—that they may consider how it may be made to act with most effect.

And all this time, while Parliament and ministers are conspiring to rob you by "law" in London, landlords, agents and bailiffs are conspiring to nibble away your property by a thousand stealthy devices at home. For instance, a rule is introduced "on the estate" that no tenant shall sell his farm except to an approved tenant or an adjoining tenant. Of course this, by restricting the market, lowers the price. Then, some landlords are hard to please about the tenant they will "approve," and keep you calling and calling again, bribing agents and bribing bailiffs, and negotiating and petitioning, with your hat, not on your head, where it ought to be, but *in your hand*, begging leave to sell your own property. Then there is a rule introduced now on most estates fixing a *maximum* price for tenant-right—you are not to get more than a certain sum for it by the acre. You bought it perhaps ten or twenty years ago at £15 an acre, but the rule of the estate *now* is £10, and you are robbed of the difference—and very thankful you must express yourself (holding your hat in your hand) for being allowed to sell it at that.

In short, between the feeling of insecurity produced by the continual tampering of "law," and the constant gnawing and nibbling of landlords and agents at home, and the quarter-acre law and the poor law, the "tenant-right of

Ulster," a property that ought at this moment to be worth ten millions, is as good as *gone*. There never were so many ejectments in Ulster counties at once as have been brought this very spring. *Extermination* is creeping northward ; and there is not in all the nine counties a single small tenant-right farmer who can say with confidence that his house is his own.

Now in such a state of things what ought you, the small farmers of Ulster, to do? Why meet legally and constitutionally, I suppose, appoint a chairman, hurl defiance at the Pope of Rome, express the utmost confidence in Lord Clarendon, and demand a revocation of the Maynooth grant.

Or meet, still legally and constitutionally, and demand a Parliament of Peers and Nominees of Peers in Dublin—so that instead of being robbed in St. Stephen's you may be robbed in "College Green !"

For government in this country is simply a machinery for grinding out the earnings of the industrious to bestow upon the idle. You, the small farmers of Ulster, are the men at this moment most exposed to robbery, of all the industrious inhabitants of Ireland, simply because you have most to lose.

But now I address the Protestant labourers and artizans. You, it is said, have the utmost confidence in Lord Clarendon, and are so happy and contented, sitting everyone of you under his own vine and fig tree, that you are ready to rise in arms (so I have read in certain addresses) full of burning zeal to chastise those "rebellious" persons who would change so happy a state of

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things! Is it so? We are told that the North is thriving, because Belfast exports much linen, and Derry sends off innumerable boxes of eggs and cargoes of corn. How much of the linen do you *who weave it* get to wear? How much of the corn do you *who sow and reap it* get to eat? Just think of this, labourers and artizans of Ulster—Ireland last year produced twice as much as would feed *all* her inhabitants, not with Indian meal, but with good Irish wheat, oats and beef. And think of *this*—there is flax enough grown and linen cloth enough woven, and wool enough shorn in Ireland to muffle up every Irishman comfortably, close buttoned to the chin. Where does it go? *Who* eats and who wears what *you* make? Who has a better right to it than you?

Ah! perhaps it is the Pope of Rome who swindles you in this fashion—it is the Man of Sin, the Seven Sacraments, the Maynooth Grant and the Mystery of Iniquity! Why, then, in that case *you* also, tradesmen and labouring men of Ulster, ought really to lose no time in holding a meeting to maintain the Protestant succession and denounce any further concessions to Jezebel.

It is, indeed, a mystery of iniquity that commits this cunning robbery upon you—it is “our glorious constitution in Church and State” that does it—one of the blackest mysteries of iniquity that ever afflicted men or outraged heaven. It is this conspiracy of “gentry” and “capitalists,” “doing what they like with *their own*,” fearing not God, neither regarding Man, that have established such free trade in human

bodies and souls that they sit now at ease as the gods of this lower world, and by the alembic of *Money*, and the crucible of starvation, extract from your blood, and sweat, and brain and marrow whatever there is in you marketable, whereby they may turn a penny and leave the offal of you to the poor houses or the fever hospital.

How this is done you shall hear. The broad land of Ireland, which was given *to you* by GOD, has been given by various Kings and Queens of England to some few thousand persons, who now claim it as absolutely theirs, with the growth upon it, and the minerals beneath it, and the air above it, "from the centre"—so says the *Law*—"up to the Heavens." But as you, the "millions" and "masses" cannot live without earth and air, these few thousand persons, having a monopoly of the articles, and finding that men will give anything and do anything rather than die of hunger, cry out—Free trade! Fair competition! No interference with bargains! You see these men are willing to sell us *themselves* for slaves, soul and body, for so much land, and shall we not purchase? Is it not fair supply and demand?

Thus also capitalists, having by their gigantic operations abolished all household and home-spun manufactures, and having laws made to their hand by the other conspirators—"the gentry"—enabling *them* to combine, and forbidding poor men to combine against them under penalties, can wring out of the working classes (by the same enlightened system of fair competition) their health and strength

and life—can take the pick and choice of them—*use them up* and fling them on a dunghill to die when they are useless.

Our great capitalists never think of manufacturing articles for their own countrymen in the home market—they must *compete* with foreign nations in foreign markets; and as all nations are less heavily taxed than these two unfortunate islands, the only way in which capitalists can meet the foreign manufacturer is by reducing and pinching, and continually pinching and reducing the wages of their own workmen. They take it all out of *your bones*.

Thus it comes to pass that both in the matter of food and manufactures *you* can supply foreign countries, and cannot keep yourselves and your children in food and clothing.

Now it is not the repeal of the Catholic Emancipation Act, nor yet the repeal of the Union Act *by itself* that will cure all this. *Nothing* will cure it save the total overthrow of the aristocratic system of government and the establishment of the People's inalienable Sovereignty.

We must have Ireland, not for certain peers and nominees of peers in College Green, but IRELAND FOR THE IRISH. I scorn and spit upon "Repeal of the Union." The "Queen, Lords and Commons of Ireland" will never be seen in bodily form upon this earth. "The golden link of the Crown" is as great a humbug as the great *Peace principle* of the "mighty Leader of the Irish People."

Oh! my countrymen, I would that I could raise your thoughts to the height of this great

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argument ; that I could make you know yourselves, and your powers and destinies, your wrongs and your rights !

Your friend and fellow-countryman,

JOHN MITCHEL.

*(From the "United Irishman" of April 22, 1848).*

## LETTER II.

**I**N my letter to you last week I set before you two or three subjects which it is worth your while to reflect upon. *First*, seeing that Ireland produces, one year with another, double as much as would feed and clothe all her people, *what becomes of it?* Who eats it and wears it, and what (besides our glorious Constitution in Church and State) do you, who create all this wealth, get in exchange for it? *Second*, seeing that your tenant-right in the North is in great danger, and that you urgently want securities and guarantees to prevent its being taken from you altogether, *who is it that threatens it?* Who wants your tenant-right from you? Against whom do you need the securities and guarantees? Is it against farmers of Leinster and Munster? Or the Pope of Rome? Or who else? *Third*, seeing that all your grand masters and deputy-grands, and grand chaplains, not to speak of their agents, drivers, stewards, sub-agents, bailiffs, and bog bailiffs, are so anxious to get your names to "addresses of loyalty" and declarations of attachment to the "Protestant Constitution in Church and State" *what is the reason* of such anxiety just now? What is it all about? And, above all, what interest have you in it?

If you have not begun to think seriously of these questions you had better begin to do so

without delay. And I will try to help you.

Your grand master landlords and their agents, sub-agents, and bog agents, I have no doubt, caution you earnestly against anything I can say to you. They tell you that I am a "Jacobin," and an "Anarchist," and a "Revolutionist," and that I am to take my trial for sedition against what they call the "laws of the land." Now, I confess that I am a "revolutionist,"—that is to say, I desire by any means, peaceable or otherwise, to alter the *system of Government and distribution of property* in this land, so that men willing to earn their bread may have leave and opportunity to earn it—so that those who till the soil may be sure that they will have enough of the produce to live upon. And I confess that I am to take my trial (or, for that matter, *two* trials) for sedition and evil speaking against the present system of "laws" and "government." This is all true, but it does not in the least alter the state of the case as to those same subjects of reflection which I have mentioned above. I am not constitutional—yet your harvests *are* carried off from you. I am not "loyal"—quite the contrary. Yet it is *true* that your ancient tenant-right is slipping fast out of your hands. I may be a revolutionist, but *you* weave and dig for half wages. I am a "Jacobin," but *you* are fast becoming paupers.

You may observe that I have not undertaken to write these letters in order to flatter you—to call you "sturdy yeomanry" and the like; in fact, I know you too well. I know your way of life, and I know that *hunger* is at most of your doors. A "sturdy yeomanry" is not bred

upon yellow meal. Your fathers, who won the Boyne and defended Derry, did not part with their Christian food and take trans-Atlantic rations in exchange. I know how it stands with you. The "gentry," the "noble lords," and fat squires (the men you won the Boyne and defended Derry for) have made a sorry yeomanry of you. They have taken the *pluck* out of you pretty well. While you had the spirit even to celebrate the exploits of your fathers by flaunting an orange and purple banner on the 12th of July these great patrons of yours in their "landlord Parliament" got what they called a "law" made to forbid you to hold your customary processions—a thing that would be forbidden in no other land in Europe—but when the famine came the "law" was allowed to expire, and you may *walk* now if you have the heart.

It is neither to taunt nor to flatter you that I speak of these things; it is merely to remind you of matters that it may be useful for you to think of when any agent or sub-agent comes, to ask you to declare your attachment to the glorious Constitution and your unalterable resolution to resist anarchy and defy the Pope.

The truth of the matter is, and you all know and feel it, that the "laws" in this land are not just laws, do not answer the purpose of laws (which is to protect the rights of all alike), and are, indeed, considerably worse than no laws. Did you ever hear of an "anarchy" or "Jacobinism" that slew a million of men, women, and children in one year? Did you ever hear of an uncivilised and savage country

so very uncivilised and savage that those who cultivated the soil, regularly delivered up the produce to others and died of hunger when they had reaped the harvest? Did you ever hear of Jacobinism that systematically denied the right of the poor man to hold the ground he tilled one hour longer than he is permitted to do it by somebody else? No. It needs the skill of educated legislators and a regular government to do that—it needs a “glorious Constitution in Church and State” to do it.

Let us see what Jacobinism and revolution specially mean. These things began in France sixty years ago, when the *first* French Revolution betel. France was then a poor, rack-rented, over-taxed country, somewhat as Ireland is now, only not half so miserable. And do you know what the Jacobins and anarchists did? Why, they abolished nobility, and landlordism, and church tithes, and rack-rents, and they gave the farmers of France the whole soil of France to cultivate for their own use and benefit. There was a good deal of trouble, to be sure, in their process, because the nobles and landlords made great resistance, as was very natural, and cried out piteously about “rights of property,” and anarchy, infidelity, destruction of ancient families (as old-established gangs of robbers always call themselves), overthrow of time-honoured institutions, “throne and altar,” “Church and State”—just as they would be sure to do here in the like case—and asked foreign Powers to help them with money and arms to fasten their yoke more firmly than ever round the necks of their own people—just as the same tribe here

are found running to the English Parliament to get coercion Bills for the same purpose—and those men who urged on the people to do themselves right were called Jacobins, and infidels, and *philosophers*, and many other bad names; and indeed there was a great deal of confusion, cruelty and misery, as there always must be for a time when the mass of the People are driven to take their affairs into their own hands—but the end of it was, the class of nobles was destroyed, the great estates of proprietors were cut up and allotted to small farmers, and France has been a rich, independent, and prosperous country ever since.

Do you see anything so very hideous and horrible in this kind of Jacobinism? Does it frighten you much, the idea of holding, each man of you, the land you occupy as your own domain for ever?

Ah! but you say what has all this to do with *Repeal*? Repeal is a Papist movement, and Papists want *ascendancy*, and if we had not Protestant England to back us the number of Catholics in Ireland would so preponderate that they could carry anything they liked against us. Now, I do assure you, my friends, that, except yourselves, there is nobody in all Ireland dreaming of religious distinctions in politics, and such nonsense is kept alive only by our worshipful grand masters with their prate about Jezebel and the Man of Sin. If you look all over the Continent of Europe you will perceive that the fullest and freest toleration, or rather the most unreserved religious equality, has been everywhere established, and that Catholic countries

have taken the lead in this—especially those Catholic countries which have got their revolutions *over*. In France and Belgium complete religious equality has long been acknowledged. In Italy, the moment they saw Austria's back turned, complete religious equality was proclaimed. Whenever any of the German States becomes its own master religious equality is the first thing the people insist upon. In truth, religious penalties and disqualifications are now nowhere to be found save as the worn-out tools and engines of some old tyranny or other. The *people* have no interest in them at all, see no meaning in them, and desire, above all things, to have done with them for ever. It may be laid down as a rule, admitting of no exception, that in these later ages, wherever the sovereignty of the People is established, there religious ascendancy can stand no longer.

But the reason why your grand masters and grand chaplains endeavour to represent the national movement in Ireland as a movement for religious ascendancy is tolerably plain. It is merely to disguise from you the true meaning and drift of it. "Repeal," they tell you, involves a religious war, and penal laws against Protestants and seizure of forfeited estates. But I tell you that no Repealer in Ireland cares a rush whether you admit seven sacraments or only two; no sane Repealer ever thinks of the forfeited estates, or would dare to propose in any assembly of three that title to landed property should be distributed on such pretext.

Neither does "Repeal" simply mean the revocation of the Act of Legislative Union

passed in 1800 and the re-establishment of the jobbing Parliament of Irish landlords contemplated with so much reverence by Mr. Grattan. That Parliament is a very fine thing to talk or sing about. It has historic associations of a theatric sort; but no Irish peasant or working man will ever pull a trigger for the sake of restoring it.

What, then, is the true value of that mighty movement that has stirred the millions of our Catholic countrymen for so many years? What hope—what faith is it that has sustained them through so many famines—that has drawn them together in multitudinous assemblages on a hundred hillsides to call the earth and the heavens to witness their wrongs and their resolves? What is this great vague national aspiration, think you? To impose penalties on your worship?—To take forfeited estates from Saxon aristocrats and vest them in Milesian aristocrats?—To enjoy the honour and glory of seeing Irish nobles and gentlemen sitting in College Green?

My good friends, what Irish Repealers really want is, that they may have leave to *live*, and not die; they want to be made sure that what they sow they shall also reap; they want a home and a foothold on a soil, that they may not be naked and famishing beggars in their own land. In one word—they demand *Ireland for the Irish*—not for the Irish gentry alone. They desire not to rob the Protestants, but to bridle the exterminators, be they Protestant or Catholic (and some of the cruellest are Catholics). They demand back, not forfeited

estates, but the long-withheld and denied right of human beings. And, inasmuch as Irish landlordism is maintained here by the English connection, and the English connexion is perpetuated by Irish landlordism, they can see no way to put an end to either but by destroying both.

Now, *this*—this, and nothing else—is the “Repeal” that stirs and rouses and thrills through the ancient Irish nation from sea to sea. It is essentially not only a national movement, but *also*—why not admit it?—*a class movement*. You have heard of romantic young enthusiasts, or Constitutional idiots, inspired by Grattan’s rigmarole, denying with chivalrous indignation that there is any question of class against class involved here. Perish the thought! They say Irish gentlemen armed for the honour of Ireland in ’82, and shall they not do so again? Think of Charlemont! Think of Leinster! Names to conjure with! These romantic enthusiasts and Constitutional idiots refuse to see that “Irish gentlemen” acted then as they act now upon the true gentlemanlike instinct. They armed for Ireland and rents, places, and jobs *then*; they arm for England and rents, places, and jobs *now*. “Why should they not join us? Why not lead us? Ah! *Why?*” Simply, gentlemen—it is a hard saying—simply because their interest is the other way—because they know that the end of British dominion here would be the end of them.

No wonder, therefore, that they try to conceal from you the true nature of the Irish movement; no wonder the grand masters and their agents,

bailiffs, and bog bailiffs exhort you to resist "Popery" and withstand the woman who sitteth upon the seven hills. They would fain draw away your eyes in any direction—to Rome, to Jericho, to Timbuctoo, but at all events from your own fields and haggards.

Consider this account which I have given to you of the true nature and meaning of the movement which is called for want of a better name "Repeal," and bethink yourself whether *you*, the Protestant farmers and labourers of the North, have in this matter any interest distinct from that of the Catholic farmers and labourers of the South, the East, and the West. If you still doubt that a hankering after religious ascendancy is at the bottom of it all, I ask you to consult the Dublin newspapers of July and August, 1846, the period when the old, corrupt, sectarian, money-gathering, and hypocritical association of O'Connell was broken up and abandoned by honest men merely because it *was* corrupt, money-gathering and hypocritical, but especially because it was *sectarian*. At the last meeting before this break-up, before leaving that Hall of Humbug for ever, I, who now address you, said (I quote from the *Freeman's Journal*):

"I am one of the Saxon Irishmen of the North, and you want that race of Irishmen in your ranks more than any other. You cannot well afford to drive even one away from you, however humble and uninfluential. And let me tell you, friends, this is our country as well as yours. You need not expect to free it from the mighty power of England by yourselves—you are not able to do it. Drive

the Ulster Protestants away from your movement by needless tests and you perpetuate the degradation both of yourselves and them. Keep them at a distance from you, make yourselves subservient to the old and well-known English policy of ruling Ireland always by one party or the other and England will keep her heel upon both your necks for ever."

This was less than two years ago. A small band of men left the aforesaid Hall of Humbug on that day, and ever since its influence declined, its treasury sank, its audiences thinned away. Not all the bluster and blarney and cant and craft of "mighty leaders," and even, I regret to say, of some "revered prelates," were able to save it. *Why* was this? Because the Irish people despised the hypocrisy and loathed the corruption, but especially because they were heartily sick of the sectarianism that kept *you* away from our ranks.

If you believe this plain account of the matter, what, then, is *your* duty? Is it to meet together, as poor Mr. Gregg's Protestant operatives did the other night, and pass resolutions about vital religion and the necessity of revoking the Maynooth grant?

Your friend and fellow-countryman,

JOHN MITCHEL.

(From the "*United Irishman*" of April 29, 1848).

## LETTER III.

**M**Y Friends—Since I wrote my first letter to you many kind and flattering addresses have been made to you by exceedingly genteel and very rich noblemen and gentlemen. Those of you, especially who are Orangemen, seem to have somehow got into high favour with this genteel class, which must make you feel rather strange. I think. You have not been used to much recognition and encouragement of late years from British Viceroy or the noble and right worshipful grand masters. They rather avoided you—seemed, indeed, as many thought, somewhat ashamed of you and your old anniversaries. Once upon a time no Irish nobleman or British Minister dared make light of the colours of Aughrim and the Boyne. But can you divine any cause for the sudden change of late? Do you understand why the Whig Lord Clarendon calls you so many names of endearment, and the Earl of Enniskillen tenderly entreats you, as a father his only child? Can these men *want anything* from you?

Let us see what the drift of their addresses generally is. Lord Clarendon, the English Governor, congratulates you on your “loyalty” and your “attachment to the Constitution,” and seems to calculate, though I know not why, upon a continuance of those exalted sentiments in the North. Lord Enniskillen, the Irish

nobleman, for his part cautions you earnestly against Popery and Papists, and points out how completely you would be overborne and swamped by Catholic majorities in all public affairs.

My Lord Enniskillen does not say a word to you about what is, after all, the main concern—the *tenure* of your farms—not one word. It is about your Protestant interest he is uneasy. He is apprehensive not lest you should be evicted by landlords and sent to the poorhouse, but lest purgatory and the seven sacraments should be thrust down your throats. This is simply a Protestant pious fraud of his Lordship's, merely a right worshipful humbug. Lord Enniskillen, and every other commonly informed man, knows that there is now no Protestant interest at all; that there is absolutely nothing left for Protestant and Catholic to quarrel for. Even the Church Establishment is not a Catholic and Protestant question, inasmuch as all Dissenters *and all plebeian Churchmen* are as much concerned to put an end to that nuisance as Catholics are. Lord Enniskillen knows, too (or, if he do not, he is the very stupidest grand master in Ulster) that an ascendancy of one sect over another is from henceforth *impossible*. The fierce religious zeal that animated our fathers on both sides is utterly dead and gone. I do not know whether this is for our advantage or not; but at any rate it is gone. Nobody in all Europe would now as much as understand it—and if any man talks to you now of religious sects, when the matter in hand relates to civil and political rights, to administration of government or distribution of property

—depend upon it, though he wear a coronet on his head, he means to cheat you.

In fact religious hatred has been kept alive in Ireland longer than anywhere else in Christendom, just for the simple reason that Irish landlords and British statesmen found their own account in it, and so soon as Irish landlordism and British dominion are finally rooted out of the country it will be heard of no longer in Ireland any more than it is in France or Belgium now.

If you have still any doubt whether Lord Enniskillen means to cheat you, I only ask you to remember, *first*, that he has written you a long and paternal letter upon the state of the country, and has not once alluded to your tenant-right; and, *second*, that he belongs to that class of persons from whom *alone* can come any danger to your tenant-right—which is your “life and property.”

As for Lord Clarendon and his friendly addresses, exhorting to “loyalty” and attachment to the institutions of the country, I need hardly tell you that *he* is a cheat. What institutions of the country are there to be attached to? That all who pay taxes should have a voice in the outlay of those taxes is not one of our institutions—that those who create the whole wealth of the State by their labour should get leave to live like Christians on the fruits of that labour—*this* is not amongst the institutions of the country. *Tenant-right* is not an institution of the country. No; out-door relief is our main institution at present—our *Magna Charta*—our Bill of Rights. A high-paid Church and a

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low-fed people are institutions ; stipendiary clergymen, packed juries, a monstrous army and navy which we pay, not to defend, but to coerce, us—these are institutions of the country. Indian meal, too, strange to say, though it grows four thousand miles off, has come to be an institution of this country. Are these the “venerable institutions” you are expected to shoulder your muskets to defend ?

But, then, “Protestants have always been *loyal* men.” Have they ? And what do they mean by “loyalty” ? I have never found that, in the North of Ireland, this word had any meaning at all, except that we Protestants hated the Papists and despised the French. This, I think, if you will examine it, is the true theory of “loyalty” in Ulster. I can hardly fancy any of my countrymen so brutally stupid as to prefer high taxes to low taxes—to be really proud of the honour of supporting “the Prince Albert” and his Lady and their children, and all the endless list of cousins and uncles that they have, in magnificent idleness, at the sole expense of half-starved labouring people. I should like to meet the Northern farmer or labouring man who would tell me in so many words that he prefers dear government to cheap government ; that he likes the House of Brunswick better than his own house ; that he would rather have the affairs of the country managed by foreign noblemen and gentlemen than by himself and his neighbours ; that he is content to pay, equip, and arm an enormous army, and give the command of it to those foreign noblemen and to be disarmed himself or *liable* to be

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disarmed as *you* are, my friends, at any moment. I should like to see the face of the Ulsterman who would say plainly that he deems himself unfit to have a voice in the management of his own affairs, the outlay of his own taxes, or the government of his own country. If any of you will admit this I own he is a loyal man and attached to our venerable institutions, and I wish him joy of his loyalty and a good appetite for his yellow meal.

Now, Lord Clarendon and Lord Enniskillen want you to say all this. The Irish noble and the British statesman want the very same thing : they are both a tail. The grand master knows that if you stick by your loyalty and uphold the British connection you secure to him his coronet, his influence, and his rental—discharged of tenant-right and all plebeian claims. And Lord Clarendon knows on his side that if you uphold landlordism and abandon tenant-right and bend all your energies to resisting the “encroachments of Popery” you thereby perpetuate British dominion in Ireland and keep the “Empire” going yet a little while. Irish landlordism has made a covenant with British government in these terms—“Keep down for me my tenantry, my peasantry, my ‘masses’ in due submission with your troops and laws, and I will garrison the island for you and hold it as your liege-man and vassal for ever.”

Do you not know in your very hearts that this is true? And still you are “loyal” and attached to the institutions of the country!

I tell you frankly that I for one am not “loyal.” I am not wedded to the Queen of

England; nor unalterably attached to the House of Brunswick. In fact, I love my own barn better than I love that House. The time is long past when Jehovah *anointed* kings. The thing has long since grown a monstrous imposture, and has already in some civilised countries been detected as such and drummed out accordingly. A modern king, my friends, is no more like an ancient anointed shepherd of the people than an archbishop's apron is like the Urim and Thummim. There is no divine right now but in THE SOVEREIGN PEOPLE.

And for the "institutions of the country," I loathe and despise them. We are sickening and dying of these institutions fast; they are consuming us like a plague, degrading us to paupers in mind, body, and estate—yes, making our very souls beggarly and cowardly. They are a failure and a fraud, these institutions. From the topmost crown jewel to the meanest detective's notebook there is no soundness in them. God and man are weary of them. Their last hour is at hand, and I thank God that I live in the days when I shall witness the utter downfall and trample upon the grave of the most portentous, the grandest, meanest, falsest and cruelest tyranny that ever deformed this world.

These, you think, are strong words, but they are not one whit stronger than the feeling that prompts them—that glows this moment deep in the souls of moving and awakening millions of our fellow-countrymen of Ireland—aye, and in *your* souls, too, Protestants of Ulster, if you would acknowledge it to yourselves. I smile at the formal resolution about "loyalty to Queen

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"Victoria" so eagerly passed and hurried over as a dubious kind of form at tenant-right meetings and "Protestant Repeal meetings." I laughed outright here on Tuesday night last at the suspicious warmth with which Dublin merchants, as if half afraid of themselves, protested so anxiously that they would yield in loyalty to none. They, democrats by nature and position, meeting there without a nobleman to countenance them, with the Queen's representative scowling black upon them from his castle, are—they declare it with most nervous solemnity—*loyal men*. Indeed, it was easy to see that a vague feeling was upon them of the real meaning and tendency of all these meetings—of what all this must end in, and to what haven they, and you and we, are all in a happy hour inevitably drifting together.

My friends, the people's sovereignty—the land and sea and air of Ireland for the people of Ireland—this is the gospel that the heavens and the earth are preaching, and that all hearts are secretly burning to embrace. Give up for ever that old interpretation you put upon the word "Repeal." Repeal is no priest movement; it is no sectarian movement; it is no money swindle; nor "eighty-two" delusions; nor puffery; nor O'Connellism; nor Mullaghmast "green cap" stage play; nor loud-sounding inanity of any sort got up for any man's profit or praise. It is the mighty, passionate struggle of a nation hastening to be born into new national life, in the which unspeakable throes all the parts and powers and elements of our Irish existence—our confederations, our Protestant repeal

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associations, our tenant-right societies, our clubs, cliques, and committees, amidst confusions enough and the saddest jostling and jumbling, are all inevitably tending, however unconsciously, to one and the same illustrious goal—not a local legislature—not a return to “our ancient Constitution”—not a golden link or a patch-work Parliament or a College Green Chapel-of-ease to St. Stephen’s—but an IRISH REPUBLIC, one and indivisible.

And how are we to meet that day? *In arms*, my countrymen, in arms. Thus, and not otherwise, have ever nations of men sprung to liberty and power. But why do I reason thus with you—with you, the Irish of Ulster, who never have denied the noble creed and sacraments of manhood? *You* have not been schooled for forty years in the fatal cant of moral force; you have not been utterly debauched and emasculated by the claptrap platitudes of public meetings and the empty glare of “imposing demonstrations.” You have not yet learned the litany of slaves and the whine of beaten hounds and the way to die a coward’s death. No; let once the great idea of your country’s destiny seize on *you*, my kinsmen, and the way will be plain before you as a pike-staff twelve feet long.

Yet there is one lesson you must learn—fraternal respect for your countrymen of the South, and that sympathy with them and faith in them without which there can be no vital nationality in Ireland. You little know the history and sore trials and humiliations of this ancient Irish race; ground and trampled first for long ages into the very earth, and then

taught—expressly *taught*—in solemn harangues, and even in sermons, that it was their duty to die, and see their children die before their faces, rather than resist their tyrants, as men ought. You can hardly believe that creatures with the gait and aspect of men could have been brought to this. And you cannot wonder that they should have been slow, slow in struggling upward out of such darkness and desolation. But I tell you the light has at length come to them; the flowery spring of this year is the dawning of their day; and before the cornfields of Ireland are white for the reaper our eyes shall see the sun flashing gloriously, if the heavens be kind to us, on a hundred thousand pikes.

I will speak plainly. There is now growing on the soil of Ireland a wealth of grain, and roots, and cattle far more than enough to sustain in life and in comfort all the inhabitants of the island. *That wealth must not leave us another year*, not until every grain of it is fought for in every stage, from the tying of the sheaf to the loading of the ship. And the effort necessary to that simple act of self-preservation will at one and the same blow prostrate British dominion and landlordism together. 'Tis but the one act of volition—if we resolve but *to live* we make our country a free and sovereign State.

Will *you* not gird up your loins for this great national struggle, and stand with your countrymen for life and land? Will *you*, the sons of a warlike race, the inheritors of conquering memories—with the arms of freemen in all your homes, and relics of the gallant Republicans of Ninety-eight for ever before your eyes—will *you*

stand folding your hands in helpless "loyalty," and while every nation in Christendom is seizing on its birthright with armed hand will you take patiently, with your rations of yellow meal, your inevitable portion of eternal contempt?

If this be your determination, Protestants of Ulster, then make haste; sign addresses of loyalty and confidence in Lord Clarendon, and protest, with that other lord, your unalterable attachment to "our venerable institutions."

JOHN MITCHEL.

*(From the "United Irishman" of May 13, 1848).*

## LETTER IV.

**I** SUPPOSE, my friends, you are aware that the English Parliament, the same body which has passed so many cheap and handy "Ejectment Acts," and which has now four times attempted to cheat you out of your Tenant-right—that these same Parliament-men have, within about three weeks, passed one of their "Acts," as they call them, creating a new "crime:" for these fellows, let me tell you, have always taken it upon them to create "crimes" whenever they liked, and, I suppose, virtues also,—as well as to establish churches and enact true religions. At one time they made it a heinous crime to celebrate Mass, which made "felons" of the Catholics,—and another crime, *not* to go to church, which nailed the Dissenters. And you know it is a Parliament "crime" at present for a man to shoot the wild birds that grow fat upon his own corn stooks, without the leave or "license" of them, the Parliament-men.

And, then, this Parliament and Government have been so long, unfortunately, endured, by reason of the miserable dissensions of the people,—have been so long suffered to carry on a system of successful plunder, and have secured to themselves so vast a revenue out of the sweat and blood of toiling men, that they can pay plenty of solemn judges, ferocious military gentlemen, upper and under clergymen, detec-

tives, hangmen, and officers of State; whose business is in their several departments to uphold the entire Government system, and make believe that it is a "glorious constitution"—and so it has come to pass that many are deceived into supposing Parliament crimes to be real crimes—the "Government" to be an institution for securing life and property, and administering justice between man and man,—“Acts of Parliament” to be real laws,—the preaching stipendiaries to be, in some sort, ministers of religion,—and resistance, or “sedition” against any part of the horrid machinery, to be nothing less than a sin.

A very sad state of society, indeed. And *we*—that is, you and other farmers, labourers, and industrious persons, who earn a livelihood, and do not live upon other people's earnings—are much to blame for having suffered it so long. But, leaving for the present this part of the subject, I desire to make you think very steadfastly for a minute on one fact: the people called “Government,” by help of these Parliament-men, have still the power of *creating crimes*, and, in the exercise of that power, they have lately created a very extraordinary “crime” indeed. They have observed that certain men in Ireland, wearied out and exasperated past endurance at the long oppression and unnatural submission and patience of this noble country, under such a system of fraud and blood, did begin at length to say to their countrymen that they should put an end to it altogether, by open and armed resistance; and to show them how similar systems of blood and fraud had been

overthrown in other countries. And the greedy gang called "Government," perceiving that the people were hearkening to such counsel, and were getting their arms and weapons to put it in practice, were a good deal frightened, as well they might be. So in a great hurry they asked their Parliament-men to read over a short paper three times, in two separate Houses (such is the form), and their Queen to sign the same; and then immediately it was proclaimed that a new "crime" was created. Yes, indeed, after the reading of that short paper, it was "felony" for anyone to write and print, or openly and advisedly to say (what is, however, God's truth), that the said "Government" is a Government of fraud and blood, and ought to be overthrown by force of arms, or otherwise; and that no people on earth would have endured the like half so long as the Irish people. We may think this, we may know it, but if we *say* it, there is "crime." And forthwith all the solemn judges, fierce military gentlemen, upper and under clergymen, detectives, hangmen, and officers of State are to try and sentence, to cut and stab, to pursue and lock up, to preach against and consign to damnation all who commit this new "crime," as if it were, indeed, a real crime in the eyes of God or man.

Now, to do this thing which the Parliament-men have made into a crime, and christened "felony,"—to speak the very God's truth, which they cannot bear to hear, to speak and preach it publicly, emphatically, effectively, and with millions for an audience, has been to me from my early years, a dearly-cherished ambition.

To demonstrate in some conspicuous manner before all the people the utter falsity, futility, and weakness of the whole British Parliamentary system of government in Ireland ; on how very unreal a basis it stood, and how it only needed a *charm*—some words boldly and truly spoken, some deeds boldly and openly done, and the whole structure, apparently so staunch and mighty, with its towers, and wings, and pinnacles, and dungeons, all of diabolic masonry, would vanish instantly, and leave scarce a smell of brimstone, to do this, or in any efficient manner help to do it, seemed to me precisely the most excellent, beneficent, religious and glorious deed that Irishmen in this age of the world could do. And that it could be done I had no doubt ;—that the thing *was* unreal, was a huge lie, and product of diabolic art, I knew well. What ! a system by which a beautiful and fertile island, producing noble and superabundant harvests year after year, became gradually poorer and poorer—was reduced to beg its bread—reduced at length to utter starvation ; and, finally, to cannibalism—a system under which millions of men, who toiled their lives through from morning to night, found at length they had no *rights*, but a right to public alms, and had realised, with all their toiling, nothing but the chance of a relief-ticket—a state of society wherein the tillers of the soil, the real masters and lords thereof, were continually found (with hat, or remnant of hat, in hand) beseeching, flattering, and bribing a few red-faced, thick-headed, and insolent individuals for leave to labour, and to live by their labour on Irish

ground,—under the delusion, as it seemed, that those thick-headed individuals, and not they themselves, were the real masters and lords—a system of dealing whereby the countless shiploads of corn and other food for man were sent away out of the island, and *money* received in exchange, which money was then immediately sent out also after the commodities, and for result of the whole transaction many rent receipts were netted,—the money being fairy-money, and having turned into leaves—a system of society, whereby the more wealth was produced the less was used by its producers, and the more skilfully, rapidly, and entirely it was carried out of the reach of those producers, the more commerce, enlightenment, and civilisation there was said to be. Manifestly this was all one huge and horrible cheat, and cried aloud to be exposed, punished, and extinguished amidst the wrath and scorn of mankind.

There was, of course, but one way to do this needful business, and it was obvious enough, too: but for a long time I could not see it. Knowing that British dominion was the power which maintained the imposture here, I long thought that if only all “ranks and classes,” as the phrase runs, could be banded together for the Repeal of the Union, the wrong and injustice would disappear; “Irish noblemen and gentlemen”—the thick-headed individuals before mentioned—would straightway treat their tenants like Christian men, and not like wild beasts, and the tillers of the soil would suddenly acquire a perpetuity in their lands, and sitting, every man of them, under his own vine and

fig-tree, would consume the fruits of the earth in peace, with none to make them afraid. It was an agreeable delusion, and the fabulous glories of "Eighty-Two" shed a glow over it for a while. But it was a dream: "Irish noblemen and gentlemen" no longer acknowledge Ireland for their country—they are "Britons;" their education, their feelings, and what is more important to them, their *interests*, are all British. British "laws" eject and distrain for them, British troops preserve "life and property," and chase their surplus tenants. For them judges charge—for them hangmen strangle. Without British government they are nothing; and they have instinct enough (albeit thick-headed) to perceive that Irish landlordism has grown so rotten and hideous a thing, that only its strict alliance, offensive and defensive, with British oligarchy saves it from going down to sudden perdition. So soon as this became clear to my mind, I, for one, desisted from the vain attempt at seducing the English landlord garrison in Ireland to fraternise with Irishmen, and turned upon the garrison itself. I determined to try how many men in Ireland would help me to lay the axe to the root of this rotten and hideous Irish landlordism; that we might see *how much would come down* along with it.

Well, then, I established this newspaper, "THE UNITED IRISHMAN;" and the programme of it, which appeared about four months ago, was universally reputed one of the most seditious, felonious, treasonable, and burglarious productions that ever appalled society. And so it was; for, do you know what I said in it?—Why,

that the life of one labouring man is exactly equal to the life of one nobleman. neither more nor less ! That the property of a farmer is as sacred as that of a gentleman ! That men born in Ireland have a right to live on the produce of Ireland—and even to make laws for Ireland ! That no good thing could come from the English Parliament or the English Government ! That all men ought to possess Arms, and know how to use them !—These were doctrines to propound to a civilised nation ! At once a cry of virtuous horror arose from all the genteel places of the land. They saw the plain consequences deducible from such Jacobin premises, and were justly alarmed. “Here is a miscreant,” they said ; “will no man stop him ? Where is it to end ? Whose life or property is safe ?” The Chief Justice of the Queen’s Bench the moment he read the document said, this paper ought to be called. not “United Irishman,” but “*Queen’s Bench Gazette.*” For what is the use, thought he, of my Queen’s Bench, if not to check miscreants of this kind ?

I knew by the outcry they raised that I had found the right road at length. By the nervous anxiety of Lord Stanley in the English House of Lords ; by the tremendous abuse of the landlord-newspapers in Ireland ; by the congregating of the Government troops, and the whetting of their slaughtering tools ; by the formidable looks of legal officials, the bubonic solemnity of the “inner bar,” and the parrot clatter of the outer,—I knew that the monster called “Government” was collecting all his energies—that his judges were getting ready

their charges, his sheriffs their good and lawful men—that his preachers,\* hangmen and detectives were all putting themselves in readiness, in their several departments, to crush the rebel who dared to say and write down (contrary to all the statutes, and all the precedents, and all the reported cases) that a poor man's life is as precious as a nobleman's.

So, being satisfied that I had the axe laid to the root of the right tree, I girded up my loins, and delivered blow on blow, not with any great strength or woodman-craft, but with right good will. Into British civilisation and commerce, into Britain's Crown and Law, into landlord Thuggee, and all enlightened theories of consolidated farming, I made horrid gashes, till, as I thought, the leafy top trembled, and the trunk groaned, and it became evident that if so vehement an attack continued, the tree would *fall*, and obscene birds no longer have shelter beneath its branches. Then the "law" discharged its first bolt, and I was arrested, and held to bail to take two trials, one after the other, for what they call "sedition"—that is, for speaking the Truth aforesaid.

But, to the amazement of all Parliament-men and Government people, I still went on exactly as before. What I had to say was GOD's truth, and I would say it: what I had undertaken to do was a sacred work, and I would do it. Nay, I began to call you, the Protestant democracy of the North, to my aid. I called aloud on you to

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\* The pulpits of most parish churches of Dublin have rung for some weeks back with pious abuse of Jacobins, meanin me.—J.M.

come and help me to abolish the system that gave away the food you raised and the cloth you wove, to be eaten and worn by strangers. I asked you what profit or pride you had in supporting foreign Queens and Princes out of your hard earnings. I asked you whether you liked paying high taxes in order to fit out troops and ships to disseminate British civilisation in India, and diffuse over China the blessings of British "Christianity," which turned out, when the bales were opened, to be nothing but printed cottons. I implored you to give over your terror about the bugbear of Popery, and to join with your countrymen in taking possession of Ireland for the Irish : and you were beginning to hearken to my appeal—when Government flesh and blood could bear it no longer. Suddenly this short paper I spoke of was written out, was read three times, her most gracious "Majesty" gave it her "royal assent," of course ; and, behold ! it was an *Act* ; and whoso should thereafter write, or print, or openly and advisedly speak, God's truth in this matter, was to be a "felon," and to be sent forthwith to the Antipodes, to labour there in chains for his natural life. And, inasmuch as I still persisted in speaking, writing, printing and publishing the truth, I am now inditing to you this letter—possibly my last—in a cell of Newgate Gaol, where I await what the blessed law and my good or evil destiny may bring me. If I escape conviction for the transportable offence next week, then comes my trial in the Queen's Bench on the following Monday ; if I escape that, then my second trial in the Queen's Bench on the following Thursday ; and if I escape them

all, then I suppose I must still remain in custody till the Government people, on some one of the three cases, pack a jury to their mind. For what is the use of a Queen's Bench, or a Government, if it cannot crush the miscreant who says one Peasant's life is equal to one Peer's.

Now, before undergoing any of my trials—while I have still the use of pen and paper—I wish to say to you that I am more than ever convinced the way I have been taking is the true and only way to deal with the “Government,” to right the wrongs of the working-men. and to achieve liberty for our country. Let the plain *truth* be told, the plain truth be acted, felony or no felony. Let Irishmen, north and south, reflect upon that maxim:—The Life of one Peasant is equal to the Life of one Peer; and follow it out to its consequences, whithersoever it may lead, be that through prisons, or anarchy, or reigns of terror, or rivers of blood;—and, above all things, remember, that no good thing can come from the English Parliament or the English Government.

For me, I abide my fate joyfully; for I know that whatever betide me, my work is nearly done. Yes; Moral Force, and “Patience and Perseverance,” are scattered to the wild winds of Heaven. The music my countrymen now love best to hear, is the rattle of arms and the ring of the rifle. As I sit here, and write in my lonely cell, I hear, just dying away, the measured tramp of ten thousand marching men—my gallant Confederates, unarmed and silent, but with hearts like bended bow, waiting till the *time* comes. They have marched past my prison windows to

let me know there are ten thousand fighting men in Dublin—"felons" in heart and soul.

I thank GOD for it. The game is afoot at last. The liberty of Ireland may come sooner or later, by peaceful negotiation or bloody conflict—but it is *sure*; and wherever between the poles I may chance to be, I will hear the crash of the downfall of the thrice-accursed "British Empire."

Your friend and fellow-countryman,

JOHN MITCHEL.

(From the "*United Irishman*" of May 20, 1848).



## APPENDIX.

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### MITCHEL'S PETITION TO THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT.

Mitchel, in the last year of his life, was elected a member of the English Parliament by Tipperary—the first Sinn Fein election. For Mitchel pledged himself never to set his foot in the English Parliament, and by his example to lead the people of Ireland to see that the only safety they had in connection with that institution was in electing representatives who would refuse to attend it, and attend instead to Ireland's business at home. But Mitchel did once draw up a petition to the English Parliament—a petition which probably not a dozen of the present generation have ever read, and which forms a perfect model for all petitions to that Parliament from Irishmen. In 1848 the Young Irelanders determined on formally demanding from England, before they repudiated the connection altogether, Repeal of the Union. Mitchel and Meagher were asked to draw up the formal petitions. Meagher's was the petition agreed upon. We here reprint Mitchel's:—

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS  
OF ENGLAND IN PARLIAMENT  
ASSEMBLED :

“THE PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED IRISHMEN  
HUMBLY SHEWETH—

That every people should mind their own business, and are best fitted to mind their own business ; and that the people of Ireland, of whom your petitioners are a few, are quite willing and well fitted to mind theirs.

That since the 1st of January, 1801, Ireland, the native land of your petitioners, has been, to its sorrow, degradation, and misery, “incorporated” with the British Empire.

That this incorporation was legally effected by a certain grievous act of your honourable House, called “an Act for the Union of Great Britain and Ireland” ; and in reality by the systems of assasination, incendiarism, and subornation, which your honourable House has always sanctioned as its means for the extension of English dominion.

That since the incorporation aforesaid, in the name of the act aforesaid, and by means of armed troops regular, and of police, spies, placemen, and others (the means which your honourable House has always approved for the sustentation of English dominion), divers persons, calling themselves successively, the ‘Imperial Government,’ have, to the utmost of their ability, and under the sanction of your honourable House, abused the native land of your petitioners for the sole benefit of the English, and the complete misery of the Irish people.

That the accumulated evil-doing of those persons aforesaid has at length necessarily inflicted upon the native land of your petitioners famine and pestilence unprecedented in the world.

That your petitioners are ignorant of and indifferent about the intentions of these divers persons aforesaid, forasmuch as they are all of necessity incompetent to govern the native land of your petitioners, which really needs to be governed ; and forasmuch as those of them whose intentions

were said to be worst did least ill to your petitioners' country, fearing to interfere in the affairs of your petitioners' fellow-countrymen where they could avoid such interference, and being opposed tooth and nail by the majority of your petitioners' fellow-countrymen, on account of their reported intentions, whether their acts were bad or worse; and those of them whose intentions were said to be best did no harm, inasmuch as, at various times, saying they would 'lay the foundation of most just systems in,' 'better the conditions,' 'improve the lot,' 'extend the happiness,' and the like, of your petitioners' native country, they were permitted by your petitioners' simple fellow-countrymen to make divers cruel experiments for such purposes.

That the incorporation aforesaid of your petitioners' native country into the British Empire has been necessarily followed by the incorporation of Irish labour into the English capitalist, the incorporation of Irish wealth into the English Treasury, the incorporation of Irish blood in the English armies, the incorporation of the Irish flag into the English jack, and the incorporation of Irish food into the English stomachs, all or any of which incorporations would not be submitted to by any other people in the world, and are so cruel and humiliating to your petitioners that your honourable House may well be, since you can safely be, surprised at our inhuman patience and our unchristian resignation.

That, however, self-preservation is a severe necessity. That of the natives of your petitioners' country not more than one million are yet starved. And that, whereas, one John Russell, a grave member of your honourable House, having rashly said to the remainder of your petitioners' fellow-countrymen (they being now in a state of direst famine, caused by the English having devoured their food), 'Help yourselves, and God will help you,' your petitioners are grievously afraid their fellow-countrymen will hearken to the advice of the Honourable John Russell aforesaid, and help themselves, whether your honourable House will

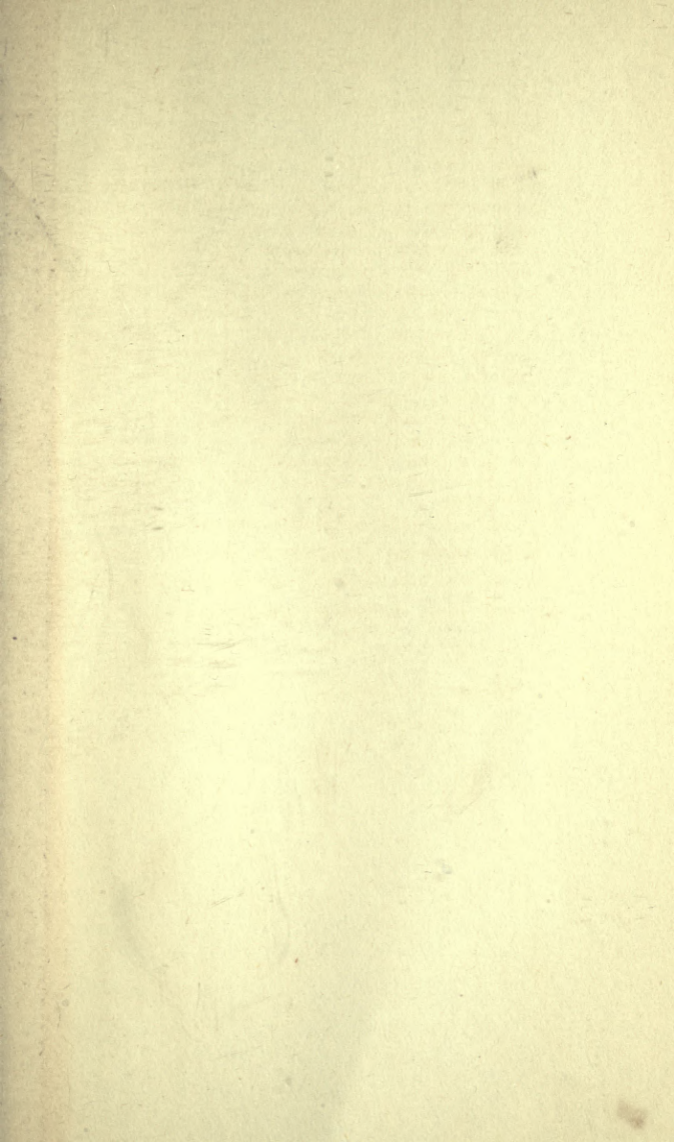
it or no, to their own food, and their own country, in future.

Wherefore your petitioners, being peaceable men, anxious to save the lives of millions of their fellow-countrymen by obtaining for them the eating of their own produce, 'peaceably, legally, morally, and constitutionally,' do beseech your honourable House to repeal the aforesaid act of 'incorporation,' called an 'Act for the Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' in order that, without offence to your honourable House, your petitioners' fellow-countrymen may be enabled to drive the armies of your honourable House, the laws, and other grievous impositions of your honourable House, the police, English accent, Manchester clothes, 'felon flag,' and all things English, off the face of their own country into the sea—an event, for which the judgment of Heaven, the incompetency and the crimes of men, are daily preparing the nations of Europe.

And your petitioners will ever pray."

When Irishmen think, speak and act to usurped alien authority in the spirit of this admirable petition we shall have reality in Irish politics.

*(From "Nationality," November 13, 1915).*









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